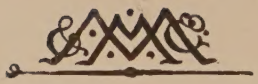

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A COURSE OF FOUR LECTURES
Delivered at Cambridge during the Lent Term, 1912

BY

WILLIAM TEMPLE

HEADMASTER OF REPTON; CHAPLAIN TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
FORMERLY FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THESE Lectures were delivered under the auspices of the Cambridge Christian Evidence Society. They are now printed from a Report taken at the time of their delivery.

I have ventured to add to them a Sermon preached in Repton School Chapel on Advent Sunday, 1911, which may serve to indicate the more distinctively religious value of the position taken in the Lectures.

It will of course be plain that so brief a discussion of topics so great is bound to be one-sided. Thus (for example), on pp. 80, 81, I have ignored altogether the difference between punishment inflicted by an injured individual and that inflicted by a community through officers who can have no personal resentment against the criminal. Except in

a complete treatise, it is necessary to say one thing at a time. The aim of such Lectures as these is not to solve problems, but to stimulate thought.

W. T.

REPTON,
March, 1912.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I

THE FOUNDING OF THE KINGDOM

THE general purpose of these Lectures is that we should discuss the relation of religion to life in general, and in particular the relation of Christianity to the life of the world in our own day; and it might be suggested that the proper order would be to take the more general subject first, and proceed at once to discuss the relation of religion to ethics as a whole. But I do not think so, because if we are to understand a great religion it is always first of all necessary that we should find out, not merely what its formularies are, but what it has meant in the experience of those who follow it. That is the only way in

which we can understand it. That is the only way in which we can acquire the right to pronounce judgment on it. The man who stands outside of a religion altogether, and merely criticises its theological formularies, is like a blind man attempting to pronounce judgment upon pictures from hearsay. If, for example, a man should repudiate the doctrine of the Trinity simply on the ground that it clashes with his own mathematical conceptions,[1] without ever inquiring how it has come about that people quite as mathematical as himself have none the less felt driven by their experience to formulate their belief in this way, he is like a blind man who should deny the possibility of perspective on the ground that pictures are painted in two dimensions. What we always have to do is, not to begin with the formularies and criticise them from outside, but to try to get back into the life of the religion and find what it has meant. The formularies themselves may conceivably be antiquated and unsatisfactory, but in any case they are not the things that

[1] This instance is used to illustrate the same point in Mr. Webb's *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, p. 72.

matter most; and consequently, as Mr. Webb has pointed out in his recent book, *Problems in the Relations of God to Man*,[1] the higher you go in the development of religion, the more vital does the historical element of the religion become. We might expect the contrary, and, indeed, many writers suggest that we ought to rise from facts to ideas. But it is not true of the history of mankind that, as their religious capacity has developed, they have become more and more indifferent to the historical origin of their religion. On the contrary, they have come to care for it more and more intensely. So if we are to discuss the more general question of the relation of religion to ethics with any real understanding of what we are talking about, we must first of all get as much content as we can for the terms of our discussion by trying to enter, at least by sympathetic imagination, and, if possible, by something more, into the experience of those people who have handed down to us the only religion with which we are at all familiar or intimate.

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 62–3.

And so we go back first to the foundation of the Christian religion, and to that conception which was always the guiding idea of the earliest gospel, and was also the point of union between its theology and its practice—the conception of the Kingdom of God. Christianity is not merely a way of living, nor is it merely a theology. It is a whole life, in which conduct and intellect are united, and it is a life that grew out of the religious experience of Israel. The method by which the progress of the world has been guided appears to have been this: that certain nations developed to the very utmost certain sides or functions of human nature in comparative isolation, and our civilisation now rests upon three main bases—the religious morality of Palestine, the intellectual passion of Greece, and the love of social order which you find in Rome—progress now being mainly the result of the interaction of these three forces. Consequently, when we want to go back to the classical period of any one side of human nature, we go back to that first development of it, when it was comparatively little fused with other functions of the human soul.

Certainly we cannot imagine that a time will ever come when we shall not go back to the art and philosophy of Greece as classic and normative for our own art and philosophy; nor can anyone who has entered into that religious experience, whose record is the Bible, believe for a moment that the human race will ever take as the classical and normal type of religious development and experience anything but what is there recorded. This does not mean that there can be no progress beyond the limits reached by these people; but progress, for us, I would suggest, lies mainly in the binding together of those elements in experience which were developed by the classical nations to a point as near perfection as they can attain in isolation.

Now the religious life of Israel had culminated in a confident expectation of the coming of the Messiah. That seems to have been quite unquestionably the governing religious belief of the people amongst whom our Lord preached, and that was the burden of His own first preaching. Consequently, if we are to understand in its true historical setting the foundation of our Christian faith

we must go back to this ideal of the Kingdom of God, and find out what He meant by it; and if we are to find out what He meant by it we must first of all know what other people thought about it, because the significance of any work of genius is always to be determined by its relation to the dominant conception of the people among whom that work was wrought. It is particularly so in all questions of religious faith; we must first know what teacher and taught will be taking for granted, and what are the new elements to be insisted upon. Let me give a simple illustration. Anyone who reads that rather strange document, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, without any reference to its historical context, may come to the conclusion that the framers of those articles thought the fundamental doctrines of Christianity comparatively unimportant, and imagined everything vital to be centred in the problem of pre-destination and freewill. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. All that was common to the whole of Christendom was stated briefly and dismissed; all that was at the time a matter of controversy had to be

carefully defined. It is always so. In order to understand the meaning of any founder we have to see him in relation to the leading ideas of the people among whom he works.

Thus the great gain that has come to us from the critical study of the New Testament has been the bringing into the foreground of this conception of the Kingdom of God. What we now call the apocalyptic problem, however difficult it may be to solve, at least represents the fact that we are all now recognising the Kingdom of God as the centre of the teaching of Christ. We have been so much concerned with St. John's interpretation and St. Paul's interpretation that we were in danger of altogether losing sight of the original historical teaching of the Lord Himself.

I suppose everyone is aware that there are in the Synoptic Gospels two main strands of thought which constitute the apocalyptic problem. There are those sayings of our Lord in which He speaks of the end and the coming of the Son of Man as imminent. It is something to be immediately expected.

"Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come."[1] "There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power."[2] And so it has been suggested lately, and very forcibly, that our Lord was under the influence of the apocalyptic thought of His time; that He shared with others the expectation that the Messiah would appear in the clouds of heaven, and further that He believed that He Himself as the Messiah would reappear very shortly after His own death. That position, most forcibly stated by Schweitzer, has now become perfectly familiar to everybody. Upon the other side there are the sayings which suggest that the Kingdom is something which must grow gradually and secretly, and that no one can tell how it comes. It does not come with observation.[3] It is not some great event striking the imagination of mankind. It is like the seed cast into the ground.[4] And the first thing that occurs to

[1] Mt. x. 23. [2] Mk. ix. 1. [3] Lk. xvii. 20.
[4] Mk. iv. 26, 27.

one to say about it is this: If it is true, as Schweitzer seems to suggest,[1] that our Lord was just the greatest of three great apocalyptists, St. John the Baptist, Himself, and St. Paul, then why is it that He is the founder of a world-religion while they are not, in that kind of sense, living influences in the world at all? St. John has become simply His forerunner and St. Paul simply His interpreter. If, on the other hand, we come back to the problem in the light of the historical result, and say: "Here is One who must have been great beyond all other men, because of what He has done in the history of the world," we shall not expect to find that He is simply a link in the chain, or that His whole outlook upon life is determined by the predominant intellectual condition of the moment. Further, we shall say we now know that there was a very widespread expectation of such a coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven; but there was no expectation of the Kingdom of God to be founded in secrecy and to grow where men could not see it. If, therefore, either

[1] *Quest*, p. 366.

of the two types of teaching is to be discredited, or to be regarded as having received embroidery and excessive emphasis at the hands of the writers of our gospels, it will be the apocalyptic, because that is the conception of which their minds were most full; so if we have to choose between these two, as to which most accurately represents the meaning of the Lord, we shall say one of these was likely to be invented or at least developed, whereas the other could not be invented or developed. It is the thought of the slow, gradual, and secret growth of the Kingdom which must be taken as historical. But I do not think we are thus driven to choose between the two. In the first place, it is surely clear that we are not at liberty to take these great sayings of our Lord with regard to the coming of the Kingdom of God as if they were prosaic statements of future history; most of them are quotations from the prophets or are in language suggested by the prophets; rather we should notice the freedom with which at all times He used them as a method of self-expression. I think that all of us who try to study the

gospels might well keep written in large letters before us all the time a little sentence which occurs at the beginning of a paragraph in Mr. J. M. Thompson's book, *Jesus According to St. Mark*—"Jesus was not a theologian."[1] It is quite clear that He is not laying down exact statements to be taken as final information. His task is not to satisfy the speculative inquiries of academic minds. Rather, we find him speaking in the language that is appropriate to the mood of the moment, sometimes in all the exultation of immediately expected triumph, sometimes with the calm foresight of one who looks out into the whole history of the world which His teaching is to leaven. So at one time He speaks of the Kingdom as founded in secrecy, and where men cannot see it. But when the seventy return and say that evil spirits are subject to them through His name, He exclaims: "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."[2] His spirit is at work; therefore the Kingdom is at hand. Satan is beaten; and in the excitement of the moment He ignores the fact that the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 185. [2] Lk. x. 18.

victory may take centuries for its completion. It is enough that it is assured, and in His exaltation at the moment He beholds the fall of the power of evil. Later on, as He looks down at Jerusalem, the centre of all that is most opposed to Him, and realises in the conditions of the time the absolute necessity of its overthrow, He sees in that overthrow the removal of the last barrier to His cause, and, grasping that, speaks of this time, now shortly to come, as being itself the coming of the Kingdom. So He alternates from one mode of expression to the other, not meaning either to be taken as literal history, and least of all these great outbursts of enthusiasm.

Yet even that, I think, is not the final solution of the matter. Of course, whatever one may say on such a subject is bound to be simply an individual's view, which must be set against many other opinions formed by other people quite equally competent, or more so. But I will venture in the time that remains to give you my reading of this matter, in order that you may see whether it

is one which, upon investigation, you can accept.[1]

There were in the world two leading conceptions of the Kingdom of God and of the Messiah, who is, of course, by definition the inaugurator of the Kingdom. We, for whom the term Messiah has been fixed once for all by Christ, are liable to forget what it originally meant. At His baptism, if not before, He became convinced He was the Messiah; but we need to inquire what this meant to Him. Whatever else the Messiah was to do, He was to found the Kingdom of God; this involved, amongst other things, that He should secure the rule of righteousness according to Jehovah's law throughout the world, and if we go back we find there were two dominant conceptions of the way in which this was to be done. The early conception was of a warrior Christ, ruling over a regenerate world from the Throne of David in Jerusalem, with which we are familiar in one

[1] For a full discussion of this matter, with the substance of which I am in cordial agreement, I would refer to Mr. Streeter's essay in the forthcoming volume entitled *Foundations* (Macmillan).

of the grandest passages of Isaiah.[1] "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, Thou hast increased their joy: they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, Thou hast broken as in the day of Midian. For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful-Counsellor, Mighty God,[2] Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the Throne of

[1] Isaiah ix. 2–7.

[2] Perhaps "Divine Hero" or some such phrase represents the feeling of the original more accurately; there is probably no idea of either Theophany or Incarnation implied by the Hebrew words. Cf. George Adam Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. I., pp. 136, 137. See also Skinner, *ad loc.*

David, and upon His Kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this."

That prophecy comes at the moment of the captivity of the Northern Tribes. Now is the time when God must vindicate His righteousness against oppression; now is the time when the Messiah will come and inaugurate the Kingdom; that will be God's answer. But there was no such deliverance; Judah also went into captivity. They returned full of hope, and in the moment of the return the Second-Isaiah hailed Cyrus by the title of the anointed one, the Messiah. "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus."[1] But after the return the glory of the Lord was not revealed; there were still difficulties and perplexities, and at last the terrible persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, when the Temple worship was stopped and there was set up in the Temple itself a statue of Zeus, whose features were the features of Antiochus. "They shall take away the continual burnt

[1] Isaiah xlv. 1.

offering and they shall set up the abomination which maketh desolate."[1] And Daniel sees in a vision a "little horn, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."[2] What will be God's answer to this Antiochus? "I beheld till thrones were placed and One that was Ancient of Days did sit; His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool: His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set and the books were opened."[3]

The answer to Antiochus is the Judgment. But the vision continues: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven One like unto a Son of Man, and He came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And

[1] Daniel xi. 31. [2] Daniel vii. 8.
[3] Daniel vii. 9, 10.

there was given Him dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His Dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."[1]

The deliverer is no longer a human King, the descendant of David, but is a supernatural Being, coming in the clouds of heaven with the authority of God. The problem has become too great for human agency. God Himself must work the deliverance by His own power.

Now this was the conception which took possession of the writers of those books which have come down to us from the period between the Old and the New Testaments. I will quote two passages from the Book of Enoch which bring out that point.[2]

"And there I saw One who had a Head of Days, and His head was white like wool, and with Him was another Being whose countenance had the appearance of a man and

[1] Daniel vii. 13, 14.

[2] I owe the selection of these two passages to Mr. Streeter's essay in *Foundations*.

his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things concerning the Son of Man, who He was and whence He was, and why He went with the Head of Days? And He answered and said unto me, 'This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen Him, and His lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness for ever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their thrones, and will loosen the reins of the strong, and grind to powder the teeth of the sinners. And He will put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms because they do not extol and praise Him, nor thankfully acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them.'"

"And at that hour that Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits and His name before the Head of Days. And before the sun and the signs were created,

before the stars of the heaven were made, His name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He will be a staff to the righteous on which they will support themselves and not fall, and He will be the light of the Gentiles and the hope of those who are troubled of heart. All who dwell on earth will fall down and bow the knee before Him, and will bless and laud and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits. And for this reason had He been chosen and hidden before Him, before the creation of the world and for evermore."[1]

Those are, perhaps, the most conspicuous instances among many in which these apocalyptic writers show how the vision of the Son of Man, which we find in the seventh chapter of the Book of Daniel, had taken possession of the religious imagination of the people.

Now these are the two conceptions—the Kingdom to be founded by political and if necessary by military means; and the Kingdom to be founded by the Son of Man descending in the clouds of heaven and established by miracle. Incidentally, one

[1] Enoch xlvi. 1–5; xlviii. 2–6 (Charles' Translation).

may point out in passing that those two seem to represent the two main strands of universal religious experience. There is one, the strongly ethical, which insists that what is required of man above all things is obedience to duty and the moral law, and that only when he has made himself fit will God act; and there is the other which seems the direct contrast of that, which insists that, if left alone, man cannot make himself fit, that this, too, must be the work of God, and that what we have to do is simply to wait for Him. Both of these are present then, in the conception of the Kingdom of God in the two main forms in which men grasped it; probably most people held both without realising that any contradiction was involved, as all of us habitually hold contradictory views about things without realising the contradiction implied. Part of the significance of St. John the Baptist would seem to be this: that he adopted the apocalyptic tone, and that he combined with it all the strong ethical teaching of the prophets; "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"; the message of the old

prophets, "Make yourselves fit," and the message of the apocalyptist, "God is about to act," are by him put together, and that is perhaps one of the reasons why he is called the greatest of them that are born of women, until the foundation of the Church itself.[1]

Into this world the Lord is born. Now it was quite possible for people who were expecting the Messiah to rest content with contradictory conceptions of Him. It is not possible for one who believes himself actually to be Messiah to rest content with such contradiction. At His baptism, or perhaps before, our Lord becomes conscious that He is to fulfil the Messianic expectation, and so immediately after the baptism He goes out into the wilderness to face temptations, some at least of which arise from the previous conceptions of the Messiahship. First there is the temptation, which arises simply from His human nature, to use the power that belongs to Him as Messiah for His own convenience, for the supply of His own wants. "Command that these stones be

[1] Mt. xi. 11.

made bread." But the power of the Messiah is not to be so used; there is to be no consideration of self whatever in the Messiah. To that we must come back again. The two following temptations should be taken, I think, in St. Luke's order rather than St. Matthew's.[1] We find our Lord first meditating political methods, looking out over the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, and yearning for them for the Kingdom of God. How were they to be won? Should He win them by adopting the rôle of Isaiah's Warrior Christ? No; that would be to fall down and worship the Prince of this World; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Then comes the severest of all, and I cannot help thinking that the account we have is our Lord's own satire on the Temptation; for of course the whole story must come from Himself, and is an account in parable of the struggle of those first days after the Baptism. It is the temptation to fulfil the apocalyptic expectation and to

[1] Mt. iv. 1–11; Lk. iv. 1–13.

appear descending upon Jerusalem upborne by angels; but it is a satire, for after all He would not be descending from heaven, but falling from the Temple-pinnacle. He would be giving a sign—the sign so often demanded of Him afterwards. But men are not to be convinced by signs, as we see from His whole method in the ministry, but by their spiritual perception of His Nature. This, however, is not the whole Temptation; it is also a temptation to ask God for a sign in confirmation of His own faith. This is made plain by the answer "Thou shalt not put to the proof the Lord thy God." The promise of God that He will be with His chosen Messiah must be accepted, and not tested. St. Luke says: "And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from Him *for a season.*" And surely this particular temptation, this temptation to ask for a sign, is one which remains with Him almost to the end. When the people try to make Him a King, He simply puts them aside and goes away. That is easy enough. But when they come asking for a sign, He turns on them with anger. "An evil and adulterous

generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it." Surely it is not fantastic to see in the passion of the reply the stress of His own soul, and its demand for a sign. But this sign, of course, is a sign from heaven, the sign of the Son of Man; His miracles are not such signs; the people see them without believing in Him, and He Himself, in His references to those which He regards as the very greatest, the casting out of evil spirits, simply appeals to the power of others to do the same. "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?"[1] These are not the sign demanded. That sign is something indubitably done by God, which shall carry absolute conviction. Shall not we be right in supposing that here we have a temptation which lasts right down to the final moment, and which reveals itself in the last bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

At the very first, then, He rejected the only forms in which the Messianic conception was held by the people at that period. He has stripped the Messiahship of everything but

[1] Lk. xi. 19.

the commission to inaugurate the Kingdom. He comes proclaiming it; He is its herald.[1] At first He makes no claim to be anything more than a herald. He works miracles, but the miracles are rather a difficulty than anything else. They cause a great stir; and we find, as we watch the story in St. Mark, a gradual growth of opposition to our Lord, and that He Himself regards His miracles as something standing in the way of His work. He sees human need and He must supply it; and then there is a great excitement about it; and the result is that after the first evening of this excitement He rises a great while before the dawn, and is away by Himself in prayer.[1] Of course the disciples are all delighted. The movement was a success; and they come out to fetch Him, saying: "All are seeking Thee." Now, they think, is His chance. But He says, No; I must go round to the villages.[2] On the journey through the villages there comes to Him a leper. He heals him, of course, but He is angry at the leper's coming. It vexes Him.

[1] Κηρύττω means *proclaim*, not *preach*.

[1] Mk. i. 35.

[2] Mk. i. 36–39.

He charges him sternly to tell no man about it.[1] This is not a thing that is to be known. That people are becoming excited about His wonderful miracles is an obstacle to His work. So it is all through. The men who are healed are bidden to say nothing about it; there is only one exception, when the man cured of the Legion is told to go and proclaim it in Decapolis; but that is probably amongst the Greeks and not amongst the Jews. The miracles, so far from being the main support of the work, are something which cannot be avoided, because, being what He is and having the power He has, when He stands in front of human need of course He must satisfy it. And then people will go and talk about this as the great thing; they come round to see more miracles wrought, bringing their sick and so on. Of course He heals them, but it is not the thing He has come for. He has come to proclaim the Kingdom.

So we watch and see the opposition growing.[2] At first people are puzzled because the disciples were not keeping one of the

[1] Mk. i. 40–44; ἐμβριμησάμενος and ἐξέβαλεν (43).
[2] Mk. ii. 18–iii. 6.

statutable fasts, and they ask, why not? He answers, How can they fast when they are happy? "Can the children of the bride-chamber"—the people responsible for keeping up the marriage festivities—"fast while the bridegroom is with them"—that is, while the wedding feast still lasts? There will come a time when they will want to fast, and then they will fast; He asserts the whole principle that religious ordinances are to be used according to the benefit to be derived from them, according to the movement of the free spirit, and not according to the rigid enforcement of regulations. Next we see them walking through the corn on the Sabbath Day; it is always about the keeping of the Sabbath that opposition arises. He walks through the cornfields, and His disciples pluck the ears of corn, and the Pharisees ask how He can permit this. He answers with the example of David, and adds words so revolutionary that St. Matthew and St. Luke have cut them out: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." That is final; and almost immediately we find the Pharisees no longer puzzled, but definitely in

opposition, looking out for opportunities to accuse Him. They watch whether He will heal on the Sabbath Day, that they may accuse Him, and immediately after a man is healed we read that they go and make friends with the Herodians, the people in touch with the civil authority, who can affect an arrest, in order that they may destroy Him. And He asks: Which of us is keeping the Sabbath holy? "Is it lawful on the Sabbath Day to do good or to do harm? To save a life or to kill?" We are inclined to say, "There is no question of killing; it is a question of waiting till sunset when the Sabbath will be over." But there was a question of killing; it was just what they were thinking about. And we are told that they held their peace; there was not much else for them to do.

So we watch the perplexity turning into definite antagonism. There comes a time now when He looks back over His ministry, and looking back over it He speaks the parable of the Sower. They all know that it is He who is meant by the Sower in the parable. The disciples ask for an explanation. He answers by saying that He speaks to the

multitude in parables "that seeing they may see and not perceive," and quotes the famous words of Isaiah.[1] Of course many commentators say: "How can this belong to the place where it is put by the evangelist? What can be more lucid and straightforward than the parable of the sower? How can it be said that the parable was spoken so that men may see and not perceive?" Well, if you take the Word scattered by the Sower to be merely moral exhortation—"if you want to be happy, be good," and the like—it is very puzzling. But that is not what He has been speaking about. He has been proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God. And He says His work is like that of the man who sows. Some of the seed falls where it will not grow at all, some where it will be choked at once, some where it will have vigorous life for a time and then wither away, and some, the remainder, on good ground. And He begins His explanation by saying: "Unto you it is given to know the *mystery—the secret—of the Kingdom of God.*" It is a parable about the Kingdom of

[1] Mk. iv. 11, 12; Mt. xiii. 11–15.

God. That is why it was so puzzling. That is why the multitude could not understand. How could they understand that He who Isaiah had said should be called "Wonderful-Counsellor, Divine Hero, Father Everlasting, Prince of Peace," should be someone who was sometimes to fail, sometimes to have partial success, and only very occasionally to succeed? Or how could the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, and bringing in the Kingdom of God, be succeeding only here and there? And He goes on: "So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth: and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how." That is His ministry: but only to them is given the secret that the Kingdom of God is something to be planted, and to grow here and there as it finds receptive soil.

But now we have to mark another stage: as a result of the opposition He has called to Him whom He would, and from among them He has appointed twelve "that they might be with Him." He is no longer simply preaching to anybody who likes to listen to Him. It

has become necessary that those who are really able to understand Him, should simply be with Him, and learn to appreciate Him, and catch something of His spirit. At the same time it becomes necessary to avoid all places under Herod's jurisdiction.[1] He carefully avoids the western side of the Lake, and goes away on a long journey to Tyre and Sidon and back by the east side of the Lake where Herod had no authority.[2] Then He goes to Caesarea Philippi; on both journeys He is with His disciples in non-Jewish regions where it is unlikely that controversy will arise or opposition be met. They are a small party of friends going about privately. And during that time the Apostles are coming gradually to understand who it is that they are with. At last He feels that they are ready, or that one at least is ready, and He asks them[3]: "Who do men say I am?" They mention all the various conjectures. Then He asks: "Who say ye that I am?" Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ." This is the

[1] Cf. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, pp. 93–98.

[2] Mk. vii. 24, 31.

[3] Mk. viii. 27–34; Mt. xvi. 13–24.

turning point of the Ministry. Someone has now recognised Him; someone, without being told about it, without being in any way forced to believe, has come to see that the Being with whom he has been in company all this time, the friend of his life, is One who cannot be accounted for in any terms known to him except the Messiahship. He has come to realise it by spiritual perception, and that spiritual perception is a gift from God. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Somebody has recognised Him; and immediately He starts on the last journey to Jerusalem. The moment someone has appreciated that He is not merely the herald of the Kingdom, but is its King, He starts upon the journey which is to end with the Cross. We find Him in St. John's Gospel continually saying "My hour is not yet come." But now it is come, for someone has recognised Him; His death now need not involve the collapse of the movement, and so He can go on with the great Messianic work that He has in hand. From that time He begins to teach them that "the Son of

Man must suffer." The Son of Man is the title by which the Messiah is described in the seventh chapter of Daniel and in the apocalyptists who draw their inspiration apparently from it. Whatever else it represents, it represents the supreme majesty of the Messiah as King and Judge of the world. The Son of Man, then, will do what? Conquer the world? No, not that. Compel people to believe by in some way over-ruling their spiritual faculties? No, not that. Judge the world and inaugurate the Kingdom of God? Yes; but in what way shall He do it? "The Son of Man must suffer." That is the great conviction to which He has been moving. His Life and Teaching have not convinced the people; one appeal remains—the appeal of His death. We can hardly doubt that He has thought over the meaning of the greatest chapter in prophecy, where the people are imagined as recognising the Servant of the Lord after His death. "Who of us believed what we heard? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (He was the Servant of the Lord, and we never recognised Him.) "He was despised

and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows; . . . . and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."[1]

And this conviction He begins to impart to those who have recognised His Messiahship. Of course St. Peter rebukes Him. That is not what he meant by calling Him the Messiah. "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall never be unto Thee." But our Lord feels that this is a revival of the old temptation, the first of the three, and He replies: "Get thee behind me, *Satan*: thou art an offence unto me; for thou thinkest not God's thoughts but man's thoughts." So they start on the journey to Jerusalem; and on the way there come to Him the sons of Zebedee with the request that they may sit the one on His right hand and the other on the left in His glory, when the Kingdom and its splendour is established. He answers: "Are ye able to drink the cup

[1] Isaiah liii.

that I drink, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" He goes on to distinguish His Kingdom from all other kingdoms. "They that are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them . . . . . but it is not so among you; but whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."[1] Thus His Kingdom is to be marked off from all other kingdoms. He is the Son of Man who will gather all nations in, and there shall be given to Him a dominion that shall not pass away. That dominion was coming, not by any act of authority, but because He would win all hearts by what He was going to do.

He proceeds to Jerusalem. By deliberately fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy at the triumphal entry He publicly claims Messiahship. He insists more strongly than ever that the inauguration of the Kingdom is imminent. The authorities are bound either to recognise or to suppress Him. He died

[1] Mk. x. 32–45.

for His claim to be the Messiah; that was the title of the accusation on the Cross; but He asserts that His death is itself the vindication of His claim. For as He stands before His judges and is asked whether He is the Christ, He answers "I am; from now onwards there shall be the Son of Man seated on the right-hand of the power of God."[1] St. Matthew and St. Luke, though with variety of language, agree in adding to St. Mark the words "Henceforth" or "from now onwards;"[2] that is strong evidence. It is ἀπ' ἄρτι in St. Matthew; ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν in St. Luke.

"From now onwards," He says, "Daniel's prophecy is fulfilled." He had said that the thing must be immediately expected, that it was going to be shortly accomplished, and they all thought it was to be some literal fulfilment; they thought He was really going to appear in the clouds. But from now, from the moment of the Passion, He is seated on the right hand of God. He is come. There is no different coming; He is come. "I, If I

[1] Mk. xiv. 61, 62; Lk. xxii. 69. Cf. Mt. xxvi. 64. (Note the very forcible order of words in Lk.)

[2] A.V., influenced by belief in a *second* coming, writes "hereafter."

be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." [1] It is done on Calvary. It is done through the Passion. The Jews, expecting the Son of Man on the clouds, were scandalised at the thought that this crucified malefactor had fulfilled the prophecy. The Greeks, in the decay of their philosophy, would not regard it as very sensible to claim that a crucified man was the Lord of Life. But just the people who were called, just the people who had spiritual vision, would see here the power and the wisdom of God. "We preach a Messiah on a Cross, to Jews a scandal and to Gentiles an absurdity, but to the very people who are called, both Jews and Greeks, a Messiah who is God's power and God's wisdom." [2]

As we look back we see that it was bound to be so. "It behoved the Messiah to suffer." [3] For He had to found the Kingdom of God. It would have been possible, of course, to fulfil the conception of the warrior Christ and

[1] Jn. xii. 32. There can be no doubt that S. John regards the Passion (of course, with its result), as the supreme "glory" of His Divine Master. *cf.* my lectures on *The Faith and Modern Thought*, pp. 110–112.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 23. [3] Lk. xxiv. 26.

subdue all nations to Jehovah's law. It would have been possible to fulfil the apocalyptic expectation, to summon the twelve legions of angels and compel belief by manifestation of Divine authority. But neither of these could make Him Lord of the hearts and wills of men. If the Messiah is the Founder of the Kingdom of God, He is the Founder of the Kingdom of the Omnipotent. If God is to be omnipotent He must be ruler, not only of men's conduct, but also of their hearts and wills; and while the heart and will cannot be compelled, they can be won. Only by winning them can they be governed. It is by winning them through the manifestation of His love in sacrifice that Christ vindicates His claim to the Messiahship. And so our answer to the apocalyptic critics of the day will be to say: Yes, surely Christ did expect His coming almost immediately; but it was not a *second* coming. There is nothing in His own language about a second coming. That all arises from the disciples' failure to rise to the full height of His teaching. He speaks of the Coming of the Son of Man. Here, I believe, we have the true reading of our Lord's own

conception of His ministry, and we have, as I shall hope to show later on, also the one line of thought along which religion and ethics can be completely united and combined together. But if that is true, the claim of Christ to the Lordship of Life is amply vindicated.

II

RELIGION AND ETHICS

CHRISTIANITY begins with the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, and, if the theory which I suggested last time is correct, with the founding of that Kingdom by the death of its King. Therefore it follows at once that a professed Christianity which omits anything which is essential to the conception of the Kingdom of God is a defective Christianity; a Christianity, that is to say, which is indifferent to moral issues, which is indifferent to those great permanent moral facts which we call the institutions of society, is a defective Christianity. It is quite plain to any of us, I think, once we have understood what the mission of Christ originally was, that if we are to follow Him we are committed, not to a religion which is merely some part of life, but to a religion which

must inevitably permeate the whole of life. What the effects of that may be expected to be, I propose to discuss more in detail next time, but I want at present to go back to the previous question. Granted that the Christian is committed to a certain line of conduct, what reason is there for supposing that a man cannot quite as well follow that line of conduct, or one equally admirable, without Christianity, or, indeed, without any religion? Supposing it is true that religion leads to goodness, is there any reason for saying that religion is necessary to goodness? Why drag in religion at all? May it not very well be the case that the religious interpretation of life is erroneous from the foundation, that it is a mere survival of primitive man's false outlook upon the world, that it has been useful at certain stages, and perhaps even down almost to the present time, in the development of the moral characteristics of humanity, and yet that mankind is now passing away from the stage in which religion is a necessity? May it not even be true that just because we are passing beyond the stage where religion is a

necessity, the maintenance of it now is an obstacle to further progress? And I am going to suggest that if we are to think clearly about this, we must distinguish very sharply two things: we must distinguish the process of finding out what good conduct is from the process of bringing ourselves to practise that good conduct when we have found it out.

The first point I want to establish is that in its nature, though probably not in its history, the moral judgment is quite absolutely independent of religion. I say in its nature, though perhaps not in its history. There is nothing more disastrous than to confuse origin and validity. It may be true that our moral conceptions have been developed through that part of experience which is called religious, but it does not in the least follow that morality needs a religious basis to maintain itself. We may have found out that a certain manner of life is good through the religious experience of the race; but, having found out that it is good, we have found out precisely that it is good in itself, and now we know it we do not mean

to forget it, and the religious basis therefore becomes no longer necessary. That may be the true account of the matter. So let us first try to consider what are the conditions of our moral judgment, and see what is the relation, if any, between this and religious faith.

The moral judgment is quite plainly one species of value-judgment. It pronounces things to be good and bad in a certain sense of the words good and bad, namely, of course, the sense which we call moral. Now all value-judgments are ultimate. The terms good and bad cannot be analysed. There is no more to be said about them than simply to find out to what objects they can be applied. All value-judgments are in their nature intuitive, and they do not admit of argument. The faculty of intuition may be trained by practice, but in the moment of approval and disapproval there is no question of argument. If I do like bad pictures or bad music, it is of no use for a superior person to come and assure me that I do not. I am finding them good. What the superior person may legitimately say is: "Yes; now

you are enjoying them, but if you will come and listen to good music for a certain space of time and look at good pictures for a certain space of time, you will cease to enjoy what you are enjoying now, and begin to enjoy something else very much more." That he is at liberty to say, on the basis of his own and other people's experience in the matter of artistic appreciation, and I may put sufficient trust in him to follow his advice; and those who trust such experience in these matters do find that what they have been told comes true; none the less the judgment itself, at the moment when one is making it, is not a thing you can argue about. One finds a thing good or one does not, and there is an end of it. Further, as Mr. Bradley has argued, "our sense of value, and for every man his own sense of value, is ultimate and final, and since there is no court of appeal it is idle even to inquire if this sense is fallible."[1]

Now I can see no reason why the value of any object should be identical for all people. Locke, as we all know, discovered or invented

[1] *Mind*, N.S., 66, p. 230.

a famous distinction—the distinction between Primary and Secondary Qualities, Primary Qualities being those which the objects had in themselves, and Secondary those which arose from the action of the objects upon the percipient. As he stated the distinction it was open to the criticism which Berkeley directed against it. But it is at least possible to maintain the distinction in a somewhat altered sense, for there are some qualities of things which are the same for all percipients, and some which are different for different persons. For colour-blind people, red and green may be identical. The science of optics may determine the wave-length of the undulations, and the result is the same for all investigators; in this matter personal peculiarities are irrelevant. But the æsthetic qualities resulting from those undulations are different for different people; and here personal peculiarities are relevant.

The optical facts are no more real than the æsthetic values; but the facts are the same for all minds (however necessary a relation to consciousness may be to their existence), and the values are not; but it does not follow that

values depend on accidents, or that every man has a right to rest content with his instinctive value-judgments at any moment. For every man is a member of the human society, and it may well be that there is a specific type of character which he ought to acquire, and with it, as a necessary consequence, a particular set of value-judgments. For what seems good to us is determined by our own condition; to the sick man what is normally a poison becomes a medicine; to the vulgar man severe beauty is insipid; to the licentious man temperance is contemptible. Yet, while denying that all men ought at last to form the same value-judgments, we may still assert that these men are wrong in those which they form. For though there is no one right judgment for all men in these matters, there is the right judgment for each individual man; and it is determined by the precise place which he holds in the general structure of society. As this member of the Society of Spirits, I have a particular destiny to fulfil. And just as I may be mistaken on a question of fact—where my peculiarities do not affect the nature of the fact—so I may be mistaken

on a question of value, where my peculiarities do affect both the judgments I pronounce from time to time and the judgments I ought to pronounce. Now these right value-judgments are in their own way facts; but they are contingent facts—contingent upon the perfection of society and all its members. And whereas the truths of the mathematical sciences can, so far as their nature goes, be all realised by one mind, the full truth about the world of value can only be realised by the whole Society of Spirits, each doing his own part.

The principle of society, then, would seem to be involved in any philosophy of value from the very outset, and when this principle of society becomes predominant the value-judgment is turned into the moral judgment, because the moral judgment, so far as I can understand it at all, is a value-judgment upon things and persons regarded as affecting society. There are phrases about duty to self, but if we analyse them I think we always find that what you mean by a duty to yourself is something the fulfilment of which will make you more effective in the world, which will

enable you to perform your public services more efficiently, or something of that kind. If so, what you are calling duty to yourself is really duty to other people which is to be realised through doing something which you happen to like. So far as I can see there can be no obligation to self. Obligation is the relation that exists between one conscious being and another, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say between one purposeful being and another; and when we judge things in this way we are pronouncing them good or bad, not in terms of pleasure (though pleasure may be included), but in the terms of the welfare of the community of persons.[1]

Now, when we turn to the growth of this moral judgment, we find it has proceeded throughout its course under the influence of some sort of religion in nearly all countries. The growth of morality is two-fold. It is partly a growth in content, from negative to positive. It is partly a growth in extent, from tribal to universal. And in both of these forms of growth it is accompanied, and as a rule, though my knowledge would not

[1] *Cf.* my lectures on *The Nature of Personality*, pp. 50–52.

entitle me to say always, it is also conditioned by a parallel development in religious conviction. We are all aware that early morality is mainly negative; it is the ruling out of certain ways of aiming at the human ideal, however that is to be defined, which have been attempted and have been found failures. Whatever else may be the way to reach the end, murder is not, theft is not, and so on. Thus we get the Second Table of the Decalogue, where morality commits itself to prohibitions—this is not the way, that is not the way; then gradually, under the pressure of experience, there begins to emerge the conception of the end which makes all this prohibition necessary, and which these methods when they were attempted failed to reach. Similarly, the growth of morality is in extent, from tribal to universal. The documents most familiar to all of us, revealing the growth of early morality, are, of course, contained in the Old Testament, where we see the conception of duty widening out from duty within the tribe to duty to all mankind.

Now both of these forms of growth, as I have said, are accompanied by, and as far as

we can judge, conditioned by, the parallel growth in the conception of God or the divine. There is first the God of the tribe, who simply enacts against certain things. We may go back, as I went back just now, to the Decalogue and think of it as representing this stage in the development of pure ethics, and so it does; but, of course, as a matter of fact it appeared to the people among whom it arose to have the authority of the divine behind it and to be the word of God to them. These were the condemnations of God. God had forbidden them to live such and such lives, and had condemned such and such types of character; then gradually, as the conception of God becomes purified through the religious experience of the great men of the race, the saints and prophets, it becomes clear that He cannot be served by the mere avoidance of this and that; He must be served by the dedication of life, by the performance of positive duties, by the building up of specific and determinate types of character. At the same time the conception of the Divine grows under the influence of religious experience, until it

becomes clear that the sphere of the Divine cannot be limited to this or that tribe. There cannot be hosts of gods each looking after one nation. The Being with whom the saints and prophets are in communion is a Being who is nothing less than the God of the whole earth. And so Amos proclaims the sole sovereignty of God. We watch the progress as it goes on in the Old Testament, until in the New Testament both religion and morality reach their climax. Each has its ultimate issue in the Kingdom of God as proclaimed by Christ, and the supreme law of ethics, the demonstrably final law of ethics, is laid down—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Of course, the words come from the Old Testament. Some critics used to say: "You will find in the Rabbis almost everything, if not quite everything, which you find in the teaching of Christ." "Yes," added Wellhausen, "and how much else besides." It was the singling out of this great principle and laying the whole emphasis upon it that made the difference. The words had been used before, but they had been used as only part, even if the most

important part, of a whole elaborate system of injunctions, not as a summary of the way of life. Thus our Lord brought ethics in its general principle to its final development, because beyond the love of all men you cannot go. Certainly, therefore, in the case of Israel, and I believe that to be only typical of the development of the religious and moral consciousness of people elsewhere, we find that ethical development has gone hand in hand with religious development.

But it does not follow that that process need continue; and, as we know, there are many people telling us that we have reached a point at which this connection has ceased to be of any value, and may, indeed, be a definite obstacle to progress. For the value of the moral law when reached does not depend upon the way in which it has been found. Most great human institutions, as Mr. Balfour has pointed out,[1] have very humble origins. The early attempts which men made to solve the problems of life may seem to us (as we look back at them) to be something totally different in character from

[1] *Questionings on Criticism and Beauty*, p. 22.

the great principles by which we endeavour to conduct our own lives. Nevertheless, you can prove the historical development of the one into the other. And we have to notice that each stage, when reached, reveals a value which can be appreciated quite independently of the process by which men reached it.

But, it may be said, even if it may possibly be the case that our moral life no longer depends upon the religious basis so far as the content of duty is concerned, still the mere fact that conscience exists at all involves the existence of God. I am not going to argue that point; I believe it to be true. It has been argued so often before,[1] that a mere brief statement would be only vexatious. But even if it is true that the existence of moral aspiration and the capacity for moral judgment in man involves a theistic interpretation of the universe for people who are going to think accurately and take account of all the data, that does not affect the contention that the moral sense itself does not necessarily depend upon religion. It may be true that when we try to account for a world in which

[1] *Cf.* (*e.g.*) Rashdall, *Philosophy and Religion*, Lecture III.

there are people capable of aspirations, people with consciences, we shall have to attribute moral character to that Being who or which is the root of all existence; otherwise we shall have an effect which transcends its own cause; but this in no way involves the denial that the moral judgment may in its essence be wholly independent of any religious basis. And this, I think, is the first conclusion that we need to reach, if we are to think clearly about this subject; it is possible for a man, at least at a certain stage of development, to hold the very highest moral conceptions without any religious life at all, and this is possible not only logically but psychologically. Indeed psychologically there is no doubt about it, for one of the great agencies in the progress of religion has been man's moral criticism of God; that is, of course, of God as understood by him at the time; it could not be anything else. The philosopher may begin with the conviction that God is unquestionably good, and proceed on this basis to criticise other people's conception of the divine; but the religious man, who perhaps is not at the same time a philosopher, will from time to time find

himself in the position represented over and over again in the great religious literature of the world, and thinking that the God he is worshipping is acting in a way that he cannot justify. The religious experience which is poured out in the book of Job is precisely the experience of the man who has a strong religious life, who has communion with God, not simply intellectual belief in Him, and who finds that God is acting contrary to his conscience, so far as he can understand the matter at all; and the author of the book, as we remember, has no solution to offer except to say that God is infinite and we cannot expect to understand Him. "Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding."[1] That is the only solution the book offers. Such is the experience which you find quite frequently in the Psalms, perhaps in none so intensely as in the Psalm quoted by our Lord in the supreme agony of His life: "My God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me? and art Thou so far from my health, and from the words of my complaint? O my God, I cry in the day

[1] Job xxxviii. 4.

time, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season also I take no rest. And Thou continuest holy, O Thou that art enthroned upon the praises of Israel. Our fathers hoped in Thee: they trusted in Thee and Thou didst deliver them. They called unto Thee and were holpen; they put their trust in Thee and were not confounded. But as for me, I am a worm and no man; a very scorn of men and the outcast of the people."[1] All he knows is that God has forgotten to be gracious. That is moral criticism thrown out by a religious man at God, and however the moral convictions at the root of this criticism may have grown, whatever may have been the effect of previous religious faith upon them, it is quite clear that, if you can have a division, such as is here represented, between a man's moral sense and God, the moral sense is not itself dependent upon the religious life. And if we choose to say that all men are now agreed that by the term God we mean a Being who is perfectly good, that only results in the question changing its form, and instead of asking why God has forgotten to be gracious men

[1] Ps. xxii. 1–6.

ask whether He exists. Is there such a Being at all? And the reason why men are asking that to-day is nearly always a moral reason. The only religious problem that I have ever come across in any one that I have met, constituting a real hindrance to religious conviction, is the problem of evil, a problem vividly and tersely stated once in a discussion by a working man who described the appalling story of his own wife's sufferings, and ended by saying, "If Jesus were God, that would not happen." In one way or another, the great problem of the religious life arises precisely from the fact that our consciences claim the right, and exercise the right, of criticising God as we know Him. It becomes, therefore, more and more clear that conscience itself is not simply the channel through which belief about God issues into conduct; it is something independent of our religious life.

All of this is, after all, implied in our Lord's own method of presenting His own claims. He would not try to force people into belief first and then persuade them to accept as good whatever He taught and did. He submits Himself first and foremost to

man's moral judgment. It is by their spiritual perception of His character that He draws men to Himself and leads them to be His disciples, by that and nothing else. We are to become His disciples according to His own invitation through our moral judgment upon Him. To that he submits Himself; to that He makes appeal. In appealing to it He educates it; just as by setting before a man something more beautiful than he has ever seen you develop his appreciation of beauty, so by setting before a man a greater type of moral perfection than anything he has ever dreamt of you educate his moral appreciation. None the less, it is to our moral judgment that He submits Himself, and I think, therefore, that those are right who say that the moral judgment is something strictly independent of the religious life. But all this does not in the least, of course, forbid a man to say, "I have seen so much of the beauty of His character that I am now going to put faith in Him for the rest; I am going to believe He is right even where at present I do not understand Him." But then that is simply following the guidance

of his own prior moral judgment. We put faith in Him because first of all we have seen and adored the beauty of His character. We trust for the rest because we have seen so much. But we did not trust altogether from the outset and on no basis at all. The basis for the beginning of a man's religious life, certainly for his acceptation of Christ, must be his own moral sense. Or, to put it briefly, God commands certain things because they are right; they are not right because He commands them.

But when we turn to the motive of morality the whole thing becomes different. What we have established so far is that we have a capacity to recognise goodness. This capacity needs training, no doubt, and may best be trained by religion. But how are we going to do our duty when we see it? I do not find that the recognition of a duty is of any great assistance to its performance. I am rather inclined, I think, to dislike a thing if it appeals to me simply in the name of duty; and if I understand St. Paul aright, so did he; "the strength of sin is the law,"[1] the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 56.

prohibition of something which one wants to do merely makes one want to do it more than ever. Certainly many of us in one department of life or another have found that that is true. The recognition that a thing is one's duty does not with most of us in itself constitute a very strong motive to the doing of it. You may say that to know the right course ought to lead to following it; and if it does not, that shows that there is something the matter with us; yes, very well; but the fact that we are bad won't make us good. And the vital question for us is this: what will enable us to do those things which, whether with or without the help of religious faith, we have found to be good, and upon which we have pronounced moral approval? For example, morality, as I understand it, requires me to love all men. Well, I cannot. Some people would say, perhaps, "No; but that is because you have not sufficient imagination. It is because you think simply of types or in abstractions. What you need to do is to cultivate the faculty of imagination, and thus realise vividly the needs of the men and the men who are feeling the needs."

But sometimes that makes it worse. As long as I simply sit still and think about the suffering of some of my fellow creatures I do find a very strong impulse to do something for them, not often strong enough to lead to action, but none the less quite perceptible. But when I actually meet the man, sometimes at least all impulse to do anything for him vanishes at once. This cultivation of the imagination, then, will not constitute the motive we require. What we want is precisely a change of will. So if there are some people who say that, as far as they know, they do always want to do their duty as they see it, and nearly always want it even enough to do it, I may feel sceptical as to whether they are telling the truth, but in any case I should say "that is their case, and not mine." Unquestionably, for such people Christianity has not got anything like so direct a value as it has for me. I should remember that our Lord Himself said "I came not to call the righteous but sinners."[1]

Quite manifestly He did not mean, when He said that to the Pharisees, that He

[1] Mk. ii. 17.

thought the Pharisees needed no change. But supposing that they were what they claimed to be, then they would not need it, and therefore they would not need the motive for the change. It is in this supplying of the motive that religion comes in. If a man does in any degree whatever fear or love God and knows that the God whom he fears or loves cares intensely for all those other people who to him are either indifferent or repellent, then there is a new motive for serving them. The duty is as it was before; we have already admitted the duty; it is to love all men and to do what we can for them. But there is a new motive, and a motive which will be strong precisely as the religious life is strong. It will have the whole strength and the whole weakness of our faith, and it is one of the tests of our faith. To go immediately to the centre of the whole matter, we come here to the moral value of the Cross. When one realises that the frame of mind that sent Christ to the Cross, alike in the Jews and in the Romans, is our own frame of mind to a very large extent, one has immediately a new horror of that

frame of mind, and a new motive for wanting to be rid of it. One may have realised before that one was indifferent to the needs of people, that one was careless about principle and the great claims of duty; but one did not much mind; and when, without any theological interpretation of the Cross at all, one sees what the effect of that frame of mind can be, and, indeed, what in itself it is when it is brought into contact with such a life as that of Christ, one begins to realise the evil of it. One has a new motive. One was aware of the evil before, but one did not feel it. Now one begins to feel it.

But if we are to go on, if we are compelled not only to say but to feel that in the Passion of Christ we see a picture of God, and of the way in which God regards our moral state, immediately the whole of our own feeling about that moral state is absolutely changed from the foundation. I say, If we feel it; for what is it that we are feeling? We are feeling that the great Power which rules the world is submitting to suffer at our hands, in a way which can only

be represented by the agony of Christ, and regards us as we inflict that agony in the way in which Christ regarded the people who sent Him to the Cross. When He is reviled He reviles not again; when He suffers He threatens not: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[1] If we really feel that, it becomes intolerable. It is like finding that, without knowing what one did, one had struck one's mother in the face. That is why the religious life can make all the difference to morality, because to the religious man all his faults, which he will now call his sins, are no longer merely a breach of law; they are the betrayal of a friend. They were wrong before; and he knew it, but he did not mind. But the religious man must mind.

The distinction which I have drawn between the content and the motive of morality ought to be clear in our minds, that we may know what to expect from our religion. Certainly we shall expect to find our consciences developed. We shall expect ourselves to be advancing under the influence of religion in

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 23; Lk. xxiii. 34.

the capacity of moral judgment. But the moral judgment in its nature remains untouched; to it Christ appeals, and it is therefore something which is not derived from our intercourse with Him, however much it may be developed by that intercourse. But when we come to the further question—How are we to obey laws which our consciences make known to us?—we find that we need new power; and religion may supply that power in very many ways, not least in the way that I am now suggesting, by awaking in us horror of our own present condition. I do not mean merely horror of some extraordinarily sinful acts; it was not crime or vice that sent Christ to the Cross; it was respectability and religious stagnation and compromise. We grow to hate a moral and spiritual condition productive of such results; we become ashamed of the state of mind which is insensitive or indifferent to love so lavishly bestowed and so cruelly wounded by our neglect. St. John, as Mr. Fraser reminded us at Liverpool, summed up his impression of Christ in the words: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.

Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him."[1] It is not that the Christian learns from Christ for the first time what the difference between good and evil is, but that his whole will is so changed that, as a matter of fact, he no longer wants to do the wrong thing. All the ages of Christendom testify that intercourse with Christ can accomplish this for the people whose faith is something more than a profession, and is become, in however small a degree, a personal experience and a reality of life.

[1] 1 Jn. iii. 6. *Cf.* Mr. Fraser's address in *Christ and Human Need* (Student Christian Movement).

III

THE KINGDOM AND THE WORLD

I WOULD begin by summarising the position we reached in the last Lecture, and adding certain qualifications to it. We reached a very definite distinction between religion and morality. We found that while it may be true that the existence of morality in the world, and of a moral sense in man, involves a Theistic interpretation of the Universe, it is none the less true that the moral sense itself does not rest upon religious conviction. Religion must commend itself to the moral sense, and, therefore, we cannot claim that the moral sense is dependent upon our creed.

But then I would add that I do not believe that it is psychologically possible for ethics to survive for many generations without religious belief; and on this point I shall have more to say next time.

Further, faith, though rooted in the moral sense, may yet itself guide the moral sense from which it springs; and that is the point I wish now to develop at rather more length.

Let us suppose that we have accepted the Christian view of life on the ground that it commends itself to our hearts, and minds, and consciences, or, if not to all of those, then to one of them sufficiently for us to take it as the guide and basis of life. What will then follow? What is, in rough outline, the Christian's duty in the world? What are the things with which he must immediately concern himself, and what are the principles by which that concern will be guided? It is not enough to say that the individual has simply to follow the example of Christ, or bring his own life nearer to the ideal in the circumstances in which he happens to find himself. That ignores one side of the conception of the Kingdom, the founding of which was Christ's primary purpose. We have considered the Kingdom previously from the point of view of its King; but we have also to remember that it must be a community. The word is

meaningless unless it includes the idea of a community and society. So the individual cannot say that he is called upon only to conform his own life to the principles of Christ. That is to ignore the whole existence of the community in which he lives; and it is to ignore one side of the fundamental teaching of Christ.

Thus we are led on to St. Paul's doctrine that Christian people are linked together in a society which is to be the organ of the will of Christ, and which, on that account, may be called His Body. As St. Paul saw the matter, it is not the individual Christian through whom the purpose of Christ is to be achieved in the world, but the Church, the whole assembly of believers, each bringing to it his own contribution, and each deriving from it a strength whose source is in the contributions of others. And so we have to consider what our duty will be not simply as individuals, but as members of a community, of a body which is the Body of Christ. St. Paul seems in his final conception of the Body to maintain that our first duty is to build up that Body itself

"until we all come to one perfect man,"[1] (all living one life, governed by one will, and that, the will of Christ), "which is the measure of the stature of the completion of the Christ." Meanwhile, until that is achieved, the Body is defective. There are elements in the purpose of God which can only be worked out through those individuals, those classes in society, those nations in the world, who at the present moment are out of touch with the Spirit of Christ; and consequently the Spirit of God is not active in the world in all its power, because part of its instrument is not yet ready to its hand. From this it follows at once, and also from the commands given by Christ personally to his disciples, that the primary duty of the Church is a missionary duty, that the extension of the Kingdom throughout the world is the primary demand made by Christ of the members of His Kingdom. May I point out, as has been pointed out before, that the one prayer which our Lord instructed His disciples to say is a mission-

[1] Eph. iv. 12, 13.

ary prayer? A prayer which begins with the petition that God's Kingdom may come and His will be done in earth as much as in Heaven and ends by commending our petitions on the ground that it is His Kingdom, Power, and Glory with which we are concerned, is quite plainly a missionary prayer. It is, as has been said, like a despatch sent home from the representative of an emperor working on the empire's frontier. He begins by saying: My chief concern is for the honour of the empire I serve and its king: "Hallowed be Thy Name;" and that its boundaries may be extended and its laws obeyed: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done." And then, because we shall need sustenance to do our work, we are allowed to ask for daily bread, though nothing more; and because we may fall short of the responsibilities entrusted to us, and have done so, we need to ask for forgiveness. And because we are weak, we need to be protected from all unnecessary temptation and from the evil which now holds us in its grip; and we come back to "Thine is the

Kingdom." The primary duty of the Church is missionary, both by Christ's command and for the simple reason that all the different capacities and all the different types of men are needed, if the whole power of Christ is to be made known. We shall not know what the whole power of Christ is until the world is Christian. Then, when the Body of Christ has been built up into its fulness, and when all are brought in and all are obeying the one will and holding the one faith, we shall no longer be tossed about with winds of doctrine, because there will be only one doctrine, the doctrine of the perfect understanding of the nature of God.

But as soon as we realise this, we are bound to notice also the fact that we are not only members of the Church, but also members of our nation, and if it is true that our Christianity is given to us almost, if not quite, entirely by our Christian environment which we call the Church, so it is true that our lives are moulded very largely by the secular environment of our nation; but that secular environment is not yet Christian, and

until it is, there is not the remotest chance of any individual person being completely Christian. As long as we live in a society which is content with pagan standards of conduct in this or that department, there will inevitably be a reaction from that upon our own characters and the completeness of our own devotion. We may be Christian Englishmen, but then at the best we are only English Christians, and we are only as Christian as the influence of England will let us be. Consequently, we are bound to secure that the society in which we live shall itself become as Christian in all its institutions as it can be made; for it is only when the secular society is Christian that the Church, whose life is in the midst of that secular society, will be able with full power to carry out its missionary responsibility, because only then will it be free from the fetters that are now imposed by the influence of our still half-pagan civilisation.

I do not wish in lectures of this kind to speak about particular social evils, or of the way in which the responsibility for them may be shown to come home upon

every individual citizen,[1] because if one begins to speak like that one has no alternative except either to advocate some particular reform or else frankly to preach; and I wish to avoid doing either. But at least this may be said: no one is content with the present social condition of England. We see on the one side a considerable number of people enjoying a great many of the good things of life with singularly little regard to the needs of others, and we see on the other side a vast amount of real want and destitution, and also a great amount of vice which is largely due to poverty. That is a state of affairs with which the Christian cannot rest content; and when he asks how it has arisen, he will become conscious it has not arisen through the peculiar wickedness of any one person or group of persons. He will further become conscious that while no doubt the people who are most depressed in the struggle for existence are for the most part people of weaker character than those who, starting from the

[1] I have tried to do this in an address published in *Christ and Human Need* (Student Christian Movement).

same place, have made a relative success of life, they are not necessarily of weaker character than those who, starting with every kind of advantage, have avoided their faults. He will also see that the real fault very seldom lies with the person who suffers, and that the child, to take a simple illustration, brought up in a bad slum home has practically no chance; and then he will come to realise that the origin of the whole horror is simply that people, speaking generally, are as good as we are and not better. If you take some millions of people just like ourselves, generous up to a point but still predominantly selfish, with varying abilities, and leave them to live together for several generations, the result will be something like the horror of our present European civilisation. The sin that has made it is just our sin. That is what our sort of character works out at if you leave it alone. There is no need for the modern man to feel self-complacent about his character or to "cease to worry about his sins." If he will go into the poorer parts of any big town or into some of the more starved villages of the country, and will

reflect that what he sees arises because the majority of people are just like himself, he will find he has plenty of room for real penitence, and plenty of need for new power. The first impulse, of course, will be, if he is sincere, to spend himself in remedying the results of all this; and no doubt we want more people to be doing that than are now doing it. But that is not enough. We must strive, if we are going to get at the root of the evil, to see that the whole atmosphere in which the citizens of the future grow up is, as far as it can be made so, a Christian atmosphere, and that its whole suggestion is of a Christian type. And here the most important influence will be the great institutions of the country. I believe the profoundest discussion of political philosophy extant is that in which Plato maintains that a political constitution or a social organisation is inevitably the reproduction on a large scale of the value-judgments of the average citizen.[1] For example if wealth is given immense political power or great social honour, you see in that fact the estimate formed by the

[1] Plato, *Republic*, Bks. viii and ix.

majority of the citizens concerning wealth. The constitution and the set of social institutions have moral and spiritual roots, and, further, they tend inevitably to produce again in the next generation of citizens the same value-judgments from which they sprang. So the children growing up in a society which worships wealth will inevitably tend to think that wealth is something of enormous importance in life, and that they can do little better than set themselves to pursue it. It is the same if we make our chief aim simply the amassing of material power of any kind. That will again suggest that the control of physical and worldly good things, or such control of men's actions as is rooted in physical power, is an immensely good thing, and the children as they grow up will tend to regard the increase of such power as the greatest thing to be imagined for themselves or for their nation. If our society is to be organised upon a Christian plan its whole tendency must be such as to suggest that the great aim of life is that it should be spent for the welfare of the whole ; and this must apply as much to nations as to individuals.

This discussion leads us on to the international question. Because of our Paganism, our home society is in ruins. It ought to be a splendid fabric, each part supporting and supplementing all the others, but it actually is a mass of rivalries and hostilities, capital against labour and labour against capital, firm against firm, man against man. So the society of Christian nations ought to be a great combination of co-operating powers, each having a different contribution to make to the life of the world, and each glad to allow scope to the others to make their contribution. It is, instead, a mere congeries of rivalries, where even friendships are dictated by self-interest.

Let us then try to consider, first of all, what a Christian society would look like ; and then let us go on to consider, with that in view, how we ought to live in the world of our own day ? It will be clear to you that I can only touch a few points, which must be taken as typical of others which would call for consideration in a more detailed discussion.

When we set ourselves to consider what the Christian society will look like, we shall make it altogether unreal, I think, if we try to draw

a picture of "Heaven" from which the wicked and undesirable are excluded. The Kingdom was not founded in a world of that kind. The Kingdom was founded, its principles laid down, and its whole method determined by the conditions of the world that we know. In the first place, the economic structure of the kingdom will be one which will insist upon the responsibility of the individual to the community and the responsibility of the community for the individual; in fact, it will inevitably, so far as I can see, be what, at any rate fifty years ago, would have passed as "Socialistic." Whether this will take the form of direct State ownership, or of State control of privately owned capital, is a matter which seems to me indifferent from the point of view of general principles; but the community will not allow that any great occupation of men can be something indifferent to it, which it can leave to run its own course. It will insist that it has a claim upon the individual, and a charge for the individual, which must first be met. Whether the wisdom of man is equal to the government of such a society is altogether another question. There is no doubt, so far

as I can see, where the Christian ideal lies. The Christian State must insist that men are responsible to the whole community in which they live, and it must have that responsibility expressed in its organisation and in the general governing conditions of their lives, which are for the most part economic; and it must also insist that the whole community and everybody in it is responsible in some degree for each individual, and is bound to consider to the very utmost his highest welfare.

Secondly, what will be the principle of its criminal administration? There will still be people needing correction, we are to suppose. How will they be corrected? What is the Christian method of correction? Not retributive, nor deterrent, nor even reformative punishment, but the conversion of the offender's heart and will by the readiness of his victim to suffer at his hands. That is the Christian method of meeting wrong-doing; it is absolutely central in the Christian creed. It is revealed in the Passion of Christ to be the nature of God, and it is the point in God's perfection which is singled

out for us to imitate: "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in Heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust . . . ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"[1] There is the Christian principle beyond all doubt. The good man will not be given to taking care that the bad man is punished, but he will convert the bad man by consenting to suffer at his hands.

The charity of the Kingdom will be absolutely indiscriminate and impartial. Our Lord made no inquiries of the people who came to Him asking for a boon as to whether they were deserving or not. On the contrary, when He perceived that a man's paralysis was due to his own sin, He said "Thy sins be forgiven thee," on the ground that this was the same thing in the circumstances as to say "Arise, take up thy bed and walk."[2] Above

[1] *Cf.* Rom. xii. 17–21. "Render to no man evil for evil . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (The "coals of fire" are, of course, those used in a forge to soften metal and render it malleable).

[2] Mk. ii. 5–11.

all things, there will not be a suggestion that, if people have involved themselves by their own fault in disaster of whatever sort, they have put themselves beyond the pale of consideration. No Christian will ever dream of saying "It is his own fault, now let him suffer for it." If Christ had taken that line, where would our redemption be? He will say, rather, "If it is not his own fault, there is not much to trouble about. We have only to put him on his legs again, and it will be all done. But if it is his own fault,—poor fellow, what can we do to help him?" Very likely we ought not to give him money and then simply leave him; that may be worse than doing nothing; but it does not follow that doing nothing is our duty. Probably we need to give something harder to spare than money, namely time—time to make friends, to find employment, and the like.

I pass on to international relationships. The Christian nation will, I think, be prepared to defend by force others who are being oppressed; but, so far as its own interest is concerned, it will choose rather to perish than to stain its soul by the passion of

war. Nor do I believe that, until some nation has done this, there will be any hope of international civilisation. Of course such a choice must be the act of the whole people and not of a government resting on a precarious majority; and, until the nation is prepared for such an act of self-sacrifice, wars of self-defence are inevitable, and in that sense justified so far as concerns those who technically declare them and those who fight in them.

I have stated these principles broadly because, as far as I can see, they follow from the conception of the Kingdom of Christ and from the whole doctrine of the Christian creed, and because they are, perhaps, those upon which our own procedure is most at variance with the ideal of the creed. But now the question arises:—What is our duty, being such people as we now are, in this world in which we live? Are we to proceed immediately, for example, to agitate for "Socialistic" reforms? or for the abolition of the police-force? or are we to adopt perfectly indiscriminate charity as our own method? What is the Christian's duty in the actual

world? Are we literally here and now to obey the Sermon on the Mount? There will be many who will say, "If you are Christians, yes. There must be no compromise with the world. If you do accept this ideal of life, you are bound at all costs to follow it." I venture to think that such an argument really involves the error, as I believe it to be, of mediaeval monasticism. With all its enormous virtues, the great objection to the monastic system appears to me to be this: it ignores the fact that you cannot cut yourself off from your generation and live in it a life which is altogether at variance with its principles. If you do, it will be something forced and not natural. It is here that men will always find the supreme miracle of the life of Christ: He lived with a certainty of communion with God, such as no one else ever had, and yet there appears in Him no consciousness that there was any alienation between Himself and God. That is what we mean, I suppose, when we speak of the sinlessness of the life of Christ. There He stands alone. It does not appear from the way in which God works in the world or the

Church that we shall find that miracle repeated in ourselves. And if not, we are involved in compromise; we are members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven—but we are also children of this world and of this generation.

I think we are involved in compromise for two reasons. First there is the personal reason. Let us take the case of charity. When Christ bestowed boons, perfectly freely, without inquiring into antecedents, or when He forgave sinners perfectly frankly and readily, as when He said to the woman who was taken in adultery "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more"—there could be no kind of suggestion that He was condoning the wrong. But if most of us did the same, not only would there be the suggestion, but there would be the moral certainty, on the part of those whom we were so treating, that we were condoning the wrong, and meant to say "Never mind." Now unless we can be quite sure that our charity, whether it is towards poverty or towards sin, is not having the effect of saying "Never mind," we shall be doing more harm than good;

that is, we shall not really be cting charitably; consequently, until we ourselves have reached a far higher pitch of spiritual life than we have yet attained, it is not right for us to imitate the actions of Christ, because we shall not be producing the same effect as He produced. Our act after all is the whole train of circumstance which we initiate; so we shall not really be repeating the actions of Christ, because we shall not be bringing into existence the same result. Whether forgiveness is good for a wrong-doer or not entirely depends on how much it costs the person who forgives. As a result of indifference it does harm; as a result of love for the sinner conquering hate of the sin it does good.

Secondly, there is the social or political necessity for compromise to which I have already alluded, arising from the fact that we are members, whether we will or no, of the society in which we live; and certainly it seems to me that our capacity to raise that society depends upon our being veritable members of it, working for the highest things which we can work for in it, but not cutting

ourselves off from it, not standing aside and giving good advice from the touch-line.

Of course, anyone who likes can say that my views are due to my having been born and bred in the Anglican tradition, which is compromise from beginning to end. It may be so, but what I have said does seem to me to be the truth of the case. But we may hope to find what are the conditions of legitimate compromise. With this in view, let us first of all distinguish points where definite law is possible from points of general conduct. Let me give a most obvious illustration. I see no reason why the Church should compromise on questions of marriage-law, or try to have the same marriage-law as the state; and I see great reason why they should try to have different ones. Here you have a perfectly clear case upon which legislation is possible. The reason for having different rules is not that the Church and the State are concerned to uphold different moralities, but that they discharge different functions in relation to the one morality. The business of the State surely is to get the best possible results out of a given material so far as

human foresight can anticipate the consequences of any action. The business of the Church is to uphold an ideal. The value of the ideal is quite independent of the question whether, at the moment, anyone is realising it. The Church points on to something towards which the whole of society should be brought. Therefore, it seems perfectly reasonable that the Church should insist upon a higher standard, if it is to sanction a marriage, that is necessary or even desirable for the State to require. What the State's marriage-law should be, is a matter to be considered by practical statesmen, who should, no doubt, have the Christian ideal before them as the point to which they would ultimately come. What the Churchman has to consider is the ideal to be maintained, and he will begin by maintaining it now. Church and State perform different functions in relation to the same ideal.

But when you come to points of general conduct outside the reach of such express legislation, the case becomes different. Suppose a man feels convinced that he can do a great deal of good for the country as a party

politician, and yet knows that, in order to be effective as a member of either party, he will have to put in his pocket a certain number of convictions, at any rate for a time: well, it seems to me quite clear that it is his duty to do it. I don't say it is everybody's duty to put themselves in circumstances where they are bound to pocket their convictions. But it is quite clear that it may become a man's duty to pocket certain convictions for the sake of others. In one sense, he is not rigidly honest. But it is the only way in which politics, when you have got a party system, or, as far as I can see, any other system, can be conducted. If so, it is unquestionably desirable that men with high Christian ideals should be willing to take part in that political life, even on such terms, rather than leave the national politics in the hands of people who have got no such ideals, which is the actual alternative.

But the Church and the official representatives of the Church must keep themselves free from the entanglements of party politics. There will come times when they should support or resist a specific measure; but they

should not take any share in the strife of parties. Their business is something far more fundamental and important; it is the formation of that mind and temper in the whole community which will lead to wholesome legislation by any party and all parties. The individual Christian, who is a member both of Church and nation, is bound to compromise; but the Church itself must never compromise, even though its ministers are thereby excluded from activities which for the moment might be beneficial.

In the same way it may be, and I think it is, the Church's duty to maintain a very definite conception of the true function of business, and the true place, let us say, of competition in the scheme of human life; and it will criticise the business world as a whole from the standpoint of its ideal. But it does not in the least follow that a Christian man is not at liberty to take his place business. On the contrary, it is immensely desirable that the greatest possible number of people following the Christian ideal should take their place in business, determined to press forward in it, as far as

they can get, towards the realisation of their ideal. They will be exposing themselves to temptation, but temptation is met with in all walks of life.

We shall deal in a similar way with war. A thoroughly Christian nation, I believe, would refuse to fight even in self-defence if only its own interest were at stake; but I do not think it follows at all that the Christian citizen of a state which has not yet reached that pitch should refuse to fight, because if he does he may be putting himself entirely out of touch with the great stream of life which at the moment may be a far nobler thing than any practicable alternative. Perhaps the noblest character of all is the one that would refuse to fight; but the man who is ready to give up his own life for the sake of his country's gain, or in obedience to his country's command, is clearly a better man than one who shirks fighting on the ground of self-interest, and there is a serious danger that a man by attempting to force the highest will, as a matter of fact, only encourage the lowest. In any case the man who on conscientious grounds refuses

to fight in a war may be called upon to take steps to get himself shot as a mutineer at the outbreak of hostilities; he must not combine martyrdom with ease and security.

I would suggest then that compromise of a certain kind with the standards of the society we live in is not only inevitable, but right. Perhaps someone will here rise and point out that we said last time that compromise was one of the forces which sent Christ to the Cross. Yes, it was; and so we need to find a principle which distinguishes permissible compromise from that which is absolutely prohibited. Let me do it by means of illustrations. The Christian man may go into business in a country where business is organised on a mainly competitive basis. If so, he must conduct his business as a competitive concern. He cannot help himself. He has to provide the same sort of commodity as is also provided by other people. If they take his market, he is made useless; he is not only unable to do anything for the elevation of the business world, but he is unable even to maintain himself there. So he must adopt the method which he finds ac-

tually at work. He must not, of course, under any circumstances yield to the temptation to dishonesty which may, in some cases, become very strong. He must not, for instance, in advertising his goods say about them more than he believes. Or, again, in the case of war, we must distinguish the temper of mind which encourages war, and the consent to fight for one's country when once war is declared. Those are quite different points. It may be, and probably is, right that a man should fight when his country calls upon him to do so, but it is unquestionably the duty of Christians to do everything in their power to avert the circumstances in which the country may so call upon them. Those two are perfectly compatible. It may be difficult to combine them, but it is by no means impossible. A man may consent to serve his country in war though he has done his very utmost to prevent war, as every Christian is unquestionably bound to do. War is an abominable thing; it is the denial of human brotherhood, and therefore also of God's Fatherhood. If people ever say to us that war with some

nation is inevitable, and had better come as soon as possible, we shall answer that war is never inevitable until human sin has made it so, and human history is in the hands of God, who will guide us if we trust Him. Above all, at a time like this, a Christian must shrink from war with horror. In the changing conditions of the world, the social unrest of Europe and America and the national stirrings of Asia, there is presented to the Church such an opportunity of claiming the world for Christ as it has never had before. When we consider how a European war just now would check our entry through the door which for a few years is so wide open, by moving the mockery of those whom we are calling to the worship of the Prince of Peace and to whom we are preaching the Sermon on the Mount, we cannot avoid the conviction that it would be an act of national or international treason to the Kingdom of God.

But if it be urged that any such compromise is proof of lack of faith, I answer: Yes, it is. But faith is the property of the Church, not of the individual alone. And as,

on the one side, we pray "Regard not our sins but the faith of Thy Church," so on the other side we must confess our inability to rise far above the level of faith in the Church of our day. We must do what we can to raise that level of faith, but we must not pretend that we are independent of it.

Our duty, then, seems to be something like this: we must compromise with the world on those points where we may be assisting the development of what is best in the actual circumstances of the society in which we live. We may unite with the higher elements of the business world in order to assist the further development of commercial morality. We may not, of course, unite with its lower elements. It is impossible to use absolute terms. You cannot say we may compromise with what is neutral, but must not compromise with what is bad, because it is impossible for the Christian to regard a purely or predominantly competitive system as neutral. You may go into any situation in life and co-operate with what is best and strongest in the actual system in which you are endeavouring to serve your country and

to serve God, but you must not unite with the lower elements in that same system; further, in any efforts which you make for the improvement of the conditions in which you are working, you must always consider the probability of success. Supposing you could get so many people to refuse to fight that war should be stopped, it might be a justifiable thing to do. But if the result was simply to make it all the harder for those who were left, it would have been an unjustifiable thing to do. And here, as in so many of the difficult cases in morality, you never know for certain until afterwards which course is the right one to adopt.

I have been speaking a great deal about competition, and propose to insert a digression on the point. It seems to me that nothing is so important from the point of view of Christianising society as to recognise that competition is not a thing limited to business. It is a thing that pervades the whole of our life. It is simply organised selfishness, and, as things stand, from the moment we become conscious, almost throughout our lives, the whole influence of our environment is

competitive, and suggests that our business is to do the utmost for ourselves in the struggle against other people. It is fostered by the innumerable, mostly quite fatuous, devices by which our industry is stimulated at school; it is fostered by the use of punishment as an incentive to industry or any other virtue, because the fear of punishment is a motive either entirely selfish or almost entirely selfish. That is the chief reason why punishment, which cannot be altogether abolished without disaster to other members of a community than the actual culprit, should always be kept at a minimum, for a motive is strengthened when appeals are made to it. The same suggestion influences us as regards our choice of a vocation. It surrounds our life on every side. It is of the utmost importance that people should be quite clear that it is not confined to business and does not arise in business. It is even found in religion in the idea that our aim is to be good, and to save our souls, irrespective of other people. A great deal has been said in praise of competition, and most of it is rubbish. It is said, for example, that you

must not interfere with natural processes; you must let the cream come to the top. But the scum comes to the top quite as much as the cream. It is sometimes said that if you want to get the best out of a man you must appeal to his own interest. That brings us to the crucial point. For if that is true, Christ was wrong. The whole gospel rests upon the presupposition of the denial of that statement. If you want to get the best out of a man, you must appeal to his loyalty, his affection, his devotion, his perception of what his conduct involves for others whom he cares for or who care for him.

If the Christian ideal of society is what I have sketched, and if all we can do is along the lines of the miserable compromise which I have outlined, how can we ever hope for the real coming of the Kingdom? Where is it to come from? We return to what I said at the beginning. Only when the world is converted and subjected to the power of the Cross shall we see the coming of that Kingdom. We can hardly even imagine a social organisation governed by principles of

redemptive sacrifice; but there are nations to whom these thoughts are not great strangers. The Indian may be less ready than the Englishman to tell the truth, but he is more ready to give his goods to feed the poor. Vicarious suffering and the refusal to resist evil are not strange or shocking to him. While our Christianity at home is so feeble, we cannot convert the world; for our spiritual power is sapped by the worldliness of our environment, and the Englishmen whose lives are witnesses against the Divine Power of Christianity are numerous. But where are we to find the power to change all this? We shall find it in the completed Body of Christ. The Home and Foreign work of the Church must go on side by side; neither can succeed without the other, and neither is more important than the other. When the East is converted and has given us its power of mystic contemplation, raised to the highest pitch by union with Christ; when Africa is converted, and has given us the treasure of its child-like affection and devotion, raised to its highest pitch by

contact with Christ; then there will come back to us from converted India and converted Africa the power which may enable us to complete the work of making England into a province of the Kingdom of God.

IV

CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER THEORIES

At the beginning of the last Lecture I stated my conviction that, while the moral sense is something that is independent of religion, yet it cannot survive in the world without some sort of religious basis; I believe that no values, except those which can be realised in the immediate present, can be appreciated by one who is altogether gripped by the conviction that the world itself is without meaning. If the whole life of the universe is something quite purposeless and meaningless, if in the end it is going to be as if we had never existed, and if all our striving and aspirations come to nothing whatever in the last resort, then I believe it is merely lack of imagination which makes it possible for a man to hold to his moral purpose in life against the value that can be realised in the

pursuit of pleasure and the like. It does not seem to me at all credible that a man should abandon, possibly for the whole of his existence here, things which as a natural man he sets great store by, for the sake of something so illusory as the moral ideal must in those circumstances appear. This is a point which comes home to us more than to our forefathers, because the whole result of the Copernican revolution in human thought is only just beginning to touch the popular mind, and the public imagination has only recently, I think, begun to grasp what is meant by the discovery that the planet upon which we live, the scene of all our efforts, is simply one satellite of a minor star. While it was regarded as the centre of the universe, its importance—its natural importance, so to speak—was something easily believed, and, as a matter of fact, was actually believed by almost everybody. But the sense of the importance and dignity of human life has, I am sure, been very greatly shaken in the popular imagination by these discoveries of science. The universe has become so much vaster, and our world and ourselves so much

smaller. We seem so trifling in regard to the universe; it is inconceivable at first sight that what we do should matter much; it seems probable that in the last resort it does not matter at all. I do not believe that the moral view of life, as distinguished from mere pleasure-seeking, can continue to influence men without some sort of religious basis, or some general view of life to lend it support, and I therefore wish now to discuss Christianity in comparison with certain other theories.

I shall make no attempt whatever at any essay in comparative religion. I have already protested against the discussion or criticism of religion by people who know nothing but the phrases in which its experiences are formulated; and as that is all that I know, or can know, of religions other than Christianity, I am not going to discuss them. But I will say just this; when people suggest, as they do sometimes, that what we need is the gathering together of the best elements in all religions and the making of a new one out of them, it may be worth while to inquire first whether Christianity has not

already done it. Supposing such a religion was formed, gathering together what most people regard as the best elements of the various faiths now in the world, it would itself become a distinctive religion, and someone would come afterwards and urge the very same course in regard to all religions then existing, including our new emaciated synthesis; so it would go on for ever. And we cannot remind ourselves too often that the things which make religion valuable are the things which distinguish religions from each other. The mere belief in God, unless we have some definite conception of what we mean by God, is absolutely worthless. There was a debate, I believe, in the House of Commons in which an epoch-making utterance was delivered. The discussion concerned the question whether or not Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was to be admitted to that assembly. There were those who claimed that whilst they were prepared to tolerate any amount of divergence in non-essentials, they must insist upon agreement in essentials, and Mr. Gladstone rose and said that, whilst defending the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh,

of course he could not regard any part of the whole creed as being non-essential. He was pleading that these considerations should not determine admission to Parliament at all. But the notion that nothing in the creed was non-essential struck one of his party as monstrous; he rose and said "But, Mr. Speaker, we all believe in a sort of a something." Now the moral and spiritual value of such belief is open to very serious question. What matters, is what we believe God to be like. The Mohammedan, for example, has a perfectly clear conception of God; no doubt it is only an outline-sketch, so to speak, but, in spite of the very many problems attending the Mohammedan conception of God, his belief is no mere form. So too the Christian has a definite conception of God. He sees many difficulties attending his belief; but his conception itself is definite and not a mere form. Those two conceptions are different; and if you try to make them the same you destroy the value of both, for the value comes with the determinateness. It is the conception of the character of God, in all the definiteness that one dares to give it, which

gives one's religious faith its vitality; and consequently we need to be very wary of any wide and broad-minded suggestion that what we have to do is to find out what is the common sub-stratum of faith in all religions, and accept that, because we are very likely to find ourselves professing a belief in a "sort of a something."

Now I wish to speak first of some views which have authority of different kinds inside Universities, but not much outside; and then of some views which have little authority in Universities but a good deal outside. First I should like to say a word or two about that view of things which is generally called Absolute Idealism. I know it best as it is represented in the works of Mr. F. H. Bradley. His doctrine is that all our experience is in varying degrees unreal, or, as he would say, is mere appearance. The true Reality lies behind, in a region altogether transcending the moral distinctions. He says that goodness is indeed more representative of the Real, or, as he would say, is real in a higher degree, than evil; but good is not a term which can

be applied to Reality itself. Obviously this is not a time in which to embark upon a detailed criticism of this view as a philosophy, but I want to point out its result: it is a frank abandonment of the problem of evil. It tells us that evil, in the last resort, is much less real than good, though of course he avoids the obvious pit-fall of pronouncing it absolutely unreal. But it also says that at the level of experience where we live there is no conquest of evil at all. *Our* experience is irredeemable. The universe is good in the experience of the Absolute, but not in ours, nor in any experience we can ever share. The experience of the Absolute is by definition something which the finite intelligence cannot reach, or, to put it in another way, which the finite intelligence can only reach by losing its finitude and becoming merged in the Absolute itself. You are, therefore, left with the choice that either you have to abandon the conception of personality, or you have to abandon all hope of real redemption in the world. Thus Absolute Reality itself, though good is said to be more representative of it than evil, is none the less a mere brute fact.

It is not in any kind of sense self-explanatory, because there is only one thing as far as I know in our experience which is self-explanatory, and that is a purpose with which we can sympathise. When we find that a man is doing something with an aim of which we approve we are, as a matter of fact, satisfied. That purpose we take as the real explanation of the event, and it is the only explanation which does not lead to further questions beyond itself. But to be told merely that the Absolute Reality is experience in which there is no contradiction, while we may assent to it as true, is no explanation whatever why the Absolute Reality should be exactly what it is, or why, still more, it should appear in the shapes in which it does appear. There is one striking passage in Mr. Bradley's account of the matter in which it seems that the Absolute indulges in His—or Its—Appearances, with all the sin and misery attendant on them, in order that its own experience may be the richer.[1] That means to say, if this is to be taken at all seriously, that the

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 194 ; *cf.* the allusion to "Catiline and Borgia" on p. 202.

one purpose which is to explain the history of the world is quite frankly an evil purpose, a purpose which will sacrifice the beings which it creates to its own greater wealth of experience. It is a purpose, in other words, with which I venture to say we cannot sympathise. That explains nothing. It leaves us still asking why it should be thus, and there is no answer given.

I pass on to a totally different attempt to handle the problems of life, the attempt of Nietzsche. Nietzsche, so far as I can understand him, is Schopenhauer plus Darwin. Schopenhauer had interpreted the Kantian criticism as leading to the theory that the only reality is will; but just because will is the only reality there is nothing upon which it can satisfy itself; and thus you have the picture of the hungry will yearning, as it were, after the satisfaction it can never obtain, because there is nothing upon which it can feed.[1] There is nothing to be done but to negate the will. We have to suppress the will to live, and in suppressing it we shall reach what he calls Nothing, but

[1] Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, Bk. ii. § 28.

what he obviously regards as Peace.[1] Then comes a great development with the appearance of biological Evolution, and you get the conception of the will as fundamentally real, but obtaining satisfaction at every stage precisely by pressing on at each stage into the stage which follows. This conception is made possible by the discovery of the development of species. Thus, to ensure development, our chief duty is to produce whatever leads to the stage which lies beyond the human—the stage of what Nietzsche calls the Overman. "Man is something to be overcome. Behold I teach you the Overman." "Ich lehre euch den Übermenschen. Der Mensch ist Etwas, das überwunden werden soll."[2] Only what is this Overman? He goes on to say that, with a view to this, every one must put forth the utmost energy of which he is capable, so that his whole nature may be developed to its highest capacity, and it looks as if he is recommending a purely selfish view of life; he does urge people to live as they would live if they were absolutely selfish; but it is not for selfish motives, since if a man

[1] *Ibid.*, Bk. iv. § 71. [2] *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, i. 3.

meets with some power that is greater than himself, and is crushed by it, he is to rejoice in the fact that humanity or nature is doing there something greater than he could have ever done himself. Consequently it is a wholly unselfish and indeed impersonal doctrine. The true follower of Nietzsche will be "a sublime altruist in his disregard of himself, an atrocious egoist in his disregard of others."[1] Nietzsche's line in general seems to be this: it does not matter what ruin is made on the way provided the Overman is produced, because it does not matter how many canvasses are spoilt so long as the masterpiece is there at last. In other words, it is a purely æsthetic view. In the æsthetic region it is quite true that it does not matter how many canvasses you ruin in the effort to produce the masterpiece.

But no kind of argument can persuade us that it is a matter of no importance how many human bodies and souls are ruined in the production of a single life. It is a matter of direct and intuitive conviction; no argument can shake it, because it is not a belief

[1] G. Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*, Preface, p. xix.

derived from argument at all. It is the judgment of the fundamental moral sense which a man has or has not. Most of us do feel, as a matter of fact, that other people's personalities have a claim upon us. The recognition of that fact is morality. If there is anybody who professes not to believe that other people can have any claim upon him, or that he is in any way concerned with their welfare, I know of no way of answering him by argument. The only method with which I am acquainted is to trap him into admitting what he has just denied, as Socrates trapped Callicles in the *Gorgias*.[1] In other words, Nietzsche, while setting forth what is in many ways a rather magnificent view of life, is simply cutting the moral question. He writes a language so marvellous that one sometimes wonders whether it would be worth while to believe his opinions if one could thereby purchase his style. He almost hypnotises one into forgetting that he is leaving out from the beginning the very facts which constitute the moral problem.

I would pass on from him for one moment

[1] Plato, *Gorgias*, 494*e*.

to deal in a similar sketchy and highly unsatisfactory manner with a writer whom I should never have dreamed of regarding as a moral teacher were it not that there are some people who appear genuinely so to regard him —I mean the most brilliant of our contemporary playwrights, Bernard Shaw. I do not profess to understand him. I only profess to enjoy his plays. He is, I am sure, passionately in earnest; but I can never find out what he is in earnest about, and I don't believe that he can either. But so far as I can make out his general position, if there really is one contained in those plays, it is this: he is possessed by a genuine moral passion; but it does not operate with regard to those things concerning which most of our consciences are active. It is a demand for intellectual clarity; and the only thing he cannot forgive, and against which he waxes morally indignant, is muddle-headedness. He does not mind what general view of life a man adopts, so far as I can see, provided that he sees it through. It does not matter if it is the mystical visionary Keegan, or the almost brutal organiser of human life, Undershaft;

either of them will do. Both of them have a perfectly consistent theory, and because they are consistent they can rout everybody else, and everybody else is feeble in comparison. I daresay most of us ought to be more alert in conscience than we are with regard to the vice of muddle-headedness, but it is simply flying in the face of the experience of mankind to exalt it into the one and only sin. His objection to the romantic writers, when they are really great and not merely sentimental, is the stress laid by them upon the dignity of life, upon the dignity of the great human passions. He objects to representing men as capable of great tragic or heroic emotions, because, as he sees them, they are not either tragic or heroic figures. I am reminded of a saying of Mr. Lowes Dickinson, that as we rise from the perusal of the great classic dramas we feel that whatever else life is, it is something dignified and great, but when we rise from the perusal of many modern writers, (I cannot help thinking that Bernard Shaw was in his mind), we feel that what is depicted in them is rather small and rather ridiculous. Which of these is true? Is it or is it not true

that the great passions which Shakespeare stages are the real passions of human nature, while what many modern play-wrights stage is a mere surface and veneer, overlaying volcanic forces which are genuinely within us, but which we conceal because we are so much afraid of them. Mr. Chesterton has said of Shaw that "all there is of him is excellent"; only he happens to be wholly lacking in certain parts of human nature which, to the majority of us, are fundamental. I believe that can be proved. He can discuss, for example, the problem of "Getting Married" in a charming "Conversation in Three Acts" without alluding to anything like human passion. The characters discuss the problem so charmingly that one forgets that it has no relation to anything whatever that happens in human life. Latterly Mr. Shaw has been explaining his own theory of the Universe; I cannot now go into his view further than to remind you that it insists upon the existence of a governing spirit of the universe, which is guiding things onwards, but which is certainly not omniscient, because it makes many blunders in the course of its progress, though

no doubt it will in the end lead up to some magnificent conclusion. Such is the overruling power in history; but any omniscient Being from whom this power proceeds he does not feel called upon to believe in. I am not going to discuss his view now. I will only point out to you, that it is part of the Christian faith. It is as Mr. Shaw has suggested[1] what the Third Person of the Trinity would be without the other Two; and the grounds for belief in the First and Second Persons are quite as cogent as those for belief in the Third.

But that is connected with the next question, about which I will say something; a belief is held in many places outside the Universities, though I think it has been exploded inside them, that progress goes on by itself, and that the way in which it goes on is by "Natural Selection." That, I suppose, broadly speaking, is the kind of view that was held by the great Liberals in the middle of the nineteenth century, though any of them would have added to it a large number of modifications, and it was supposed

[1] *Man and Superman* (Revolutionist's Handbook), p. 185.

to be supported by the Darwinian doctrine of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. It can hardly be necessary to remind a University audience that the survival of the fittest does not mean the survival of the best; it means the survival of those who under the conditions are most fitted to survive; nothing more. Take the greatest man of your experience, deprive him of weapons, and confront him with a hungry tiger; there will be a struggle for existence resulting in the survival of the fittest, but it is not a stage in "progress." And we have to remind ourselves, particularly in dealing with religion, that most of the great religions of the world have decayed. The level at which they stand now is, upon the whole, not so high a level as that at which they have stood in the past. It might be urged that out of the decay of one religion there arises another which is better, and thus progress still goes on; but it would be rather difficult to maintain that merely through our leaving natural forces alone anything like what we call morality or moral progress will result, unless, of course, the religious impulses of man with

all the activities which they prompt are included under "natural forces." That is a belief without any foundation in fact. And when it is said—"Is not God the God of nature, and should not we imitate the ways of nature?" I say: Yes, that is true in one sense; He is the God of nature, of which human nature is one part, and His nature will be more perfectly revealed at the more fully developed stages of evolution; we shall therefore find more about God by looking at man, the greatest thing that He has made so far as our experience goes, than we shall by looking at the animal creation; and if there arises in human nature an impulse that checks the process of allowing the weaker to go to the wall and all the rest of it, we shall say it is more representative of the divine than that other struggle which we watched at the lower levels of evolution. We shall avoid the great blunder of supposing that being true to nature means being true to the primitive and elementary; it means truth to the general course and tendency which we find in the progress of nature, where such

progress can be traced, and whatever the cause of such progress may be.

And now I come to the only theory which I personally regard as seriously formidable; to discuss it at all worthily would take so long that I shall speak of it even more briefly and sketchily than I have done of others: I mean the economic theory of history as it is usually held by disciples of Karl Marx. There is so vast an amount of truth in it; it is so impossible to doubt that our moral standards are very largely framed, without our being the least aware of the fact until we have studied it, by the organisation, and particularly the economic organisation, of the life in which we live, that it seems possible at first to argue that all moral conceptions are simply derived from economic forces, and that by reorganising the economic forces and those akin to them we shall reorganise people's moral conceptions and regenerate them. Moreover it is entirely true that by reorganisation of this kind one could do a great deal towards the regeneration of character. But I would simply ask one question, and there leave the matter. What

is there peculiar about the economic, social, or political organisation of Palestine in the first centuries B.C. and A.D., which accounts for the life of Christ? There is not the remotest doubt that the life of Christ has become the pivot of human history. We may like it or dislike it, but it cannot be disputed. From His day until now, He and the Church He founded have entered into the life of men so as to become one of the great forces in relation to which men must frame their purpose and guide their lives. They may resist Him; they may yield to Him; or they may be deliberately indifferent to Him; but they cannot forget Him altogether. And so unless this theory will account for the genesis of Christianity itself, it is obviously unable to account for the human history which, from that day to this, has come under the Christian influence.

And Christianity, whatever else it does, certainly does full justice—and, I think, alone among religions does full justice—to the physical and material. It is, indeed, its materialism which is the stumbling-block to many who aim at holding purely spiritual views of life. The insistence that

"Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," which St. John regards as absolutely vital, strikes many people as materialistic. But Our Lord Himself opened His career by going about healing men's diseases, and if it is true, as I suggested in the first lecture, that He regarded the excitement caused by those acts of healing as a hindrance rather than a help to His work, then still more emphatic becomes the implied declaration that material evil must be removed when there is an opportunity of removing it, even though this is hindering the great purpose of His Life. As He stands there with the power of healing, confronting the people, He must give what they need. There can be no doubt that Christianity is concerned not merely with people's souls or with their well-being hereafter, but with their whole nature, and with the whole physical side of life.

But it is said that the Christian type of character, when you come to look at it, is not a great type. It is rather poor-spirited; it is lacking in force; it is mean. Or when it is none of these things it becomes officious and interfering; religion makes busybodies.

I believe that these accusations are due to a misunderstanding of the fundamental Christian virtue of humility. That virtue, whatever else it may involve, is primarily forgetfulness of self. Now a man who has forgotten himself, if he has got a great work to do, will not be lacking in force. On the contrary he will fling himself into the work with an abandonment quite unknown to the man who is self-conscious. He ignores insults, because he does not know he is insulted; he is unencumbered by the ridiculous appendage which military people call their honour. He looks at the world with the eyes of a child, and enjoys it like a child. Far from being something mean and lacking in courage such a character possesses courage of a far higher kind than that of the self-conscious hero. Again, the officiousness sometimes complained of is always due precisely to lack of the virtue of humility. It is to be noticed that in the Beatitudes, after the first, our Lord gives two series, one concerning the inward and one concerning the outward life; they are arranged alternately, and if you take those which deal with our outward life and

our relations to other people, they run, "Blessed are the meek," "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are the peace-makers." It is worth while to notice that whereas mercifulness or forgiveness is almost an insult when offered to us by a man who is conscious of his own virtue, every taint of that is removed when there is no trace of self at all in his action. It is the self in his mercy that is annoying. Or if a man should go to two people who are quarrelling and offer to make peace between them, it would certainly seem officious and interfering if it was felt he was thinking of himself or of his duty in doing it; but if he made peace by the mere fact that in his presence quarrelling became difficult or impossible there could be no offence. It is quite true, I think, that to practise certain Christian virtues, if one has not this fundamental grace of self-forgetfulness, is quite extraordinarily offensive to one's neighbours; but if one has it, the offensiveness is gone.

But, in any case, it will be urged that Christianity requires an alteration of life which is in itself a miracle. Both the claims and the promises of Christ exceed anything of

which we have elsewhere any experience at all. I wish quite definitely to say that, whatever our view of specific miracles may be, the demand for miracle is absolutely inherent in religion. Either religion is nothing at all for us, or else it is belief in a power which enables a man to do what without his religion he could not do, that is, to act in ways which the study of natural science will never lead us to understand. What the limits of this new power may be, I do not know. It may include power over perfectly dead matter, or it may not. I am inclined to think that it does, for I believe that faith makes available for man all the infinite resources of Almighty God, so that by faith a man could literally walk on the water or remove mountains. Whether or not the thing is rightly called miracle, and whether these manifestations of power can be grouped under rules and generalisations of the same kind as those which we call laws of nature, is a question so remote from the practical problem as not to require discussion in these lectures.

The last problem which I shall touch upon

is this: Morality, we have said, is distinct from religion; is it not true also that they are always and inevitably in conflict? Religion, and above all the Christian religion, holds out the hope of forgiveness and the promise of forgiveness. Is not forgiveness immoral? Is not this simply a way of avoiding the penalty of our wrong-doing? Is it not more manly to say "No; I will not by any means try to get off what I have brought on my own head. I have sinned and I will suffer; but I will not plead to any God to forgive me. To be forgiven is to admit a radical inferiority, and that I will never do; it would be a lack of self-respect. And the preaching of forgiveness is simply telling people that after all what they do does not matter in the end." That is an objection to religion that has come down from all ages. It is substantially the criticism of Buddha upon the Brahmanism of his time. It is made familiar, to all who read Plato, in the great speech of Adeimantus in the second book of the *Republic*, it which he says that our only authority for belief in God are the poets, and they tell us that the Gods can be turned from

their purpose by prayers and offerings, so that the wise man will rob freely, and offer sacrifice out of the proceeds.[1] The answer to all this is that whether forgiveness is offensive or not, and whether forgiveness itself is detrimental to morality or not, depends upon what it costs the man or Being who forgives. If forgiveness were something which were granted in some such form as saying "Never mind, we won't take any notice," then it would be both offensive to our own moral nature and detrimental to the cause of moral goodness in the world. But that is not at any rate the Christian view of forgiveness. What it costs God to forgive man is shown in the Cross; and if a man is feeling that what he has done involves agony to One who none the less forgives him, he is not going to take offence at being forgiven; and if he feels that what he does costs agony to One who none the less forgives him, he is not going to say "It does not matter; I can do it again." The man who believes in the forgiveness of God through such agony as is symbolised in the Cross will not raise these objections; they are the objec-

[1] *Rep.* ii. 365*e*.

tions of those who stand outside and do not know the nature of the experience which they criticise.

Thus, when we come to understand it, forgiveness is seen to be the greatest glory of God. Then, apparently, the more we sin the better! But no one will argue like that who has a real desire to glorify God.[1] It is a purely dialectical argument. How can we any longer go on sinning as if it were a matter of perfect indifference? The state of mind in which the desire to glorify God arises is incompatible with the committing of wrong actions. Further, forgiveness of the kind that Christianity promises is the strongest of all motives to change of character. I spoke of this at the end of the second lecture. But if anyone should say that what morality demands is that a man should face the consequence of his acts and bear them, and that what will keep a man from wrong-doing is simply a fear of those consequences, so that the promise of forgiveness by weakening that fear destroys morality, I should answer that the kind of justice which he is upholding is in

[1] *Cf.* Romans vi. 1–11.

itself quite valueless, and as a motive it is quite or almost ineffective. I wonder how many people there are whose conduct is genuinely affected by the thought of Hell; they must be extremely few. But the number of people whose conduct is affected by the belief that their wrong-doing means to God what is set before us in the Cross are very many. It is a stronger motive and it is a better motive; for it is an appeal not to a man's selfishness, but to his generosity. It is a motive which, in checking wrong-doing, also develops the tendency to good, which fear of punishment can never do. So what I would claim for the religion of the Christian is that as it alone does justice to every side of human nature, so it alone constantly appeals to what is highest in human nature. Should we prefer people if they responded mainly to the fear of punishment or mainly to some bare conception of abstract duty? Or do we prefer men who respond to the appeal of sympathy, of love, and of devotion? If the latter, then remembering that the appeal to any motive always strengthens that

motive, we shall say that this, and this alone, is the ground upon which character can be developed, and on which alone it is desirable that it should be developed.

The fear of Hell may check wrong tendencies, and so give the better side of our nature opportunity to grow; but as a dominant motive it can in the end do nothing but harm, because it is a purely selfish passion. The desire for Heaven, if Heaven is conceived as offering enjoyments such as the selfish man takes pleasure in, is equally demoralising. But we "have not so learned the Christ." The Life Divine is revealed to us as the life of service, which wins men's hearts to itself by absolute self-forgetfulness, and to enter Heaven means to share that life. For the Kingdom of God was founded when its King was crowned with thorns.

Still from the Cross He challenges the generations: "Who do men say that I am?" And there is none now but will answer that at least He is one of the prophets. But that is not enough. If we are to enter the Kingdom that He founded we must acknow-

ledge Him as its King, and the spirit of His life as the law that governs alike the individuals who are to be its citizens and the nations which are to be its provinces. So He puts to us the further question: "Who say ye that I am?"

THE DIVINE JUDGMENT

REV. I., 7.

Behold He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him: and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him. Even so, Amen.

THROUGH all the Bible runs the thought of Divine Judgment. From the sentence upon Adam and Eve, and the condemnation of Cain, to the closing vision of St. John's Apocalypse runs the great proclamation that God is King over the world that He has made, and requires absolute obedience to His command. And the various stages of religious development may be marked by the changes that pass over this great conception of the Divine Judgment.

At first it is the immediate judgment of

God upon the individual offender. Adam and Eve disobey; their innocence immediately is gone, and with it all peace of mind. Cain "that did the first murder" brings Death into a world that is represented as not knowing it till then, and he becomes a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth. The hand of God is seen in the evil consequences of men's misdeeds. Later on the thought of the Chosen Nation began to govern men's minds, and it was the Nation rather than the individual that was threatened with judgment. All the prophets are chiefly concerned with the faithlessness of the whole people; the people sin, either led away by their kings or through sheer infidelity, and the people will go into captivity. "You only have I known of all the nations of the earth," says the Word of the Lord through Amos, "therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities." But it was soon felt that this judgment upon a whole people would be less than just to some individuals, and would, moreover, leave Jehovah without a witness in the world. So there arose the hope that a remnant would be delivered, saved from the general destruction

by their faithfulness to hold up before the world the great truth that God is One and that the One God is Holy.

Meanwhile there arose also the expectation of an anointed Deliverer, sent by God to vindicate His law, and to establish the rule of righteousness. At first this promised Messiah was thought of as a King of the House of David, ruling in Jerusalem; the government was to be upon His shoulder, and His name to be Wonderful-Counsellor, God-like Hero, Father Everlasting, Prince of Peace. He was not only to deliver Israel, but to found upon earth the Kingdom of God; to pronounce sentence upon all who had offended God, and to reveal the God of Israel as the God of all the earth by bringing other nations into subjection to—or fellowship with—Israel. Then, as the religious experience of the people deepened under the discipline of the captivity, men began to think of the Messiah, the promised Deliverer, rather as one who should descend from heaven with hosts of angels, summon all peoples to His judgment seat, pronounce their doom, and inaugurate the new era when God should manifestly rule in

the world and His law of righteousness be universally obeyed for evermore. Such is the vision of the coming of the Son of Man which we find in the Book of Daniel; and we know, both from Ezekiel and from many of the Psalms, that the expected judgment was to be a judgment of individuals quite as much as of nations. Both in the earlier and the later prophets, from the time that the hope of the deliverance of the Remnant is introduced, we find the conviction that the judgment will be a process of sifting out the faithful from the unfaithful. And the day is awaited with terror. "Men shall go into the caves of the rocks," says Isaiah, "and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake mightily the earth."

This combination of fear with the expectation of a sifting out of the faithful from the unfaithful meets us again at the opening of the New Testament in the preaching of John the Baptist. "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? . . . . . I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh

after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor; and He will gather up His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."

But, as we should expect, there is a change in the conception of those who had come under the influence of Christ. They had a new sense of proportion. It was not the punishment that seemed to them so terrible, but rather the sin itself. St. Paul describes in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the deliverance that had come to him through Christ. It was not deliverance from punishment, it was deliverance from sin itself. His sin had filled him with fear; but it was not fear of punishment, it was fear of committing the same wrong act again. He felt helpless. "The evil that I would not, that I do . . . . . O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank my God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In Christ

he found the power which could change his heart. And the sifting out of the true servants of God is imagined by him as the almost automatic result of the Life and Death of Christ. As St. John says "This is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men preferred darkness rather than light," so St. Paul sets up before men's souls the Cross of Christ, and sees men judged by the effect it has upon them. To some it is a scandalous idea; to some it is just stupid; but to some it is the answer to the deepest need of their heart and mind and conscience. "We preach a Messiah on a Cross, to Jews a scandal and to Gentiles an absurdity; but to the very people who are called, both Jews and Greeks, a Messiah who is God's power and God's wisdom." To people who are morally self-satisfied, and are anxious that the faults of their neighbours should be sternly corrected, this picture of the Messiah, the Judge of the World, dying on a Cross is a stumbling-block, a scandal, a thing morally objectionable; of course we don't say such things of Christ Himself, but we say them of anyone who tries to imitate Him.

And to people who sit in their arm-chairs, and think how they would have made the world if they had happened to be God—a process which both in Ancient Greece and Modern Europe has often usurped the great name of philosophy—the story of the Cross seems foolish ; they would not have made a world which they could only save by dying for it. But to those who know their own defects and their own powerlessness, who see the taint of evil over all creation, and who know that their own best days are not the days of unbroken satisfaction and contentment but the days when they have struggled, even at great cost, against evil in themselves and the society they live in—to them it is as sunshine breaking through a thunder-cloud when they hear that God is bearing all the sorrow that comes from sin, that God is bearing all the burden of His creatures' misery. For then the evil of the world will be done away at last ; then the weakness of their wills becomes the opportunity of God's strength which is made perfect in weakness ; then God Himself, as never before, is seen to be a God whom we can worship and must love.

But what has become of Judgment? Is the rejection of Christ its own punishment and the acceptance of Him its own reward? Well, what other punishment or reward can there be? When a man has been offered the secret of all joy and has rejected it, there is no need to threaten him with further pains and penalties; he has done for himself the worst thing that any one can do for him. He has chosen to follow the pleasures that never satisfy, the interests which fade and vanish, the purpose whose very achievement is trifling and paltry; for the time he may be contented, but by little and little that contentment must die away, and his soul shrivel "like a parched pea." There is no need to threaten such a man with Hell; he has deliberately chosen it for his abode; at first no doubt he likes it very well; but as an abiding-place for eternity it is intolerable. There is no punishment beyond the fulfiment of his choice.

Nor is there any reward beyond the fulfilment of his choice for the man who tries to follow Christ. For to follow Christ is to be united with God; it is life eternal; it is Heaven. As we look at the life of fellowship

with Christ from outside, we think it singularly unattractive; there is no comfort or indulgence in it; there is no providing for our private little luxuries; there is only the long tiring journey which starts indeed from the Mount of the Transfiguration but ends on the Mount of Calvary; the only sustenance we are offered is the strength to break our bodies as Christ broke His Body in symbol at the Last Supper and in fact upon the Cross. Yet those who shared His life found as they looked back that it was the Life of God, and that when they were with Him they were in Heaven. There is no reward beyond, except to be with Him and to do His will; "in Thy presence is the fulness of joy."

"God is reigning from the Tree"; the Cross still stands before the minds of men, and men are still sifted by it, and are divided, the sheep from the goats. And the "glorious majesty" in which Christ comes to found His Kingdom and to judge the world is the perpetual victory of the Cross and of the love there manifested over the worldliness of men.

But we live far away from God. We think of Him as we might think of a human judge

—a man unknown to us, whose duty is to enforce the law against offenders, for whom we have no personal feeling though we may fear what he will do to us. So the old Jews thought of God and His judgment; but not so should we think of it. For "we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father." Let us try to believe in God's Fatherhood, we that have been made "children of God." If we disobey our own parents, we may be punished; but surely none of us is so selfish as to fear the punishment as much as we fear the pain our disobedience gives to them. So let it be with our thought of God; His love exceeds their love, and His suffering at our wrong-doing exceeds theirs. He may punish us, but our fear will not be fear of punishment. St. Peter denied his Master at the supreme crisis of His Life; do you think blows or flames of fire could have stung him more than what the Master did? "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter; . . . . and he went out and wept bitterly."

We know that no rules or regulations can

ever be so subtly framed as to cover all the details of life, and if we think of God as Law-giver and Judge we shall feel that much of our lives lies outside the scope of His command. Even our consciences do not cover all our lives; they approve this and condemn that, but on very much they give no help whatever; and often when they ought to speak clearly they are silent. We know that we have a more searching test than our own consciences in our sense of shame when any that we care for or respect find us out in some mean action. If we become aware that the approach of footsteps makes us anxious, then we are doing wrong, even if our consciences had made no protest at all. For our consciences are never much better than we ourselves are; they are just our accepted moral standards. And the sense of shame before those we love is a surer guide. But let us remember that the gaze of God is fixed upon us more constantly than that of friends or parents. If we really believed in Him and were conscious of His Presence, shame would keep us from wrong-doing even when duty failed.

In the sense of the Presence of God we have a surer guide to life than any law can be; in the knowledge of His Love we have at once the pledge of our deliverance from sin, and the punishment of our sin in time past

"For behold, He cometh"; eternally He cometh; He is in the world, building up His Kingdom. "He cometh with clouds"—the power of Heaven is on His side and the triumph of His cause is sure. "And every eye shall see Him," for at the last the world will have become manifestly obedient to Him. "And they also which pierced Him," and then they will know the sinfulness of their sin.

Let us on this Advent Sunday fix our minds on the certainty of the Divine Judgment. The one thing that matters in the end is how we stand in that Judgment. The call of Christ comes to us to follow Him: and we pause, and reflect, and wonder if the path He treads is one where it would be good for us to follow; and often we refuse; and we think that we were the judges and it was the call of Christ on which sentence was

pronounced. But it is not so. It is we who are judged, not Christ; and the man who has rejected Christ has thereby condemned himself.

For behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him, and we also which pierce Him.

If we try in the manner of the old prophets or of St. John in the Apocalypse to gather up in one picture the significance of the Divine Judgment upon our lives as it has been unfolded in successive generations, and as the Judgment itself runs its course through all the ages, the picture will be something like this. We shall go back first to the vision of Daniel; "I beheld till thrones were placed and the Ancient of Days did sit . . . . . thousand thousands ministered unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgment was set and the books were opened." We are summoned before the Judgment Seat, and we fall prostrate expecting the sentence which must pronounce our doom. And there is silence. For a while we wait in wonder. When we look up the pomp and the majesty are gone; the in-

numerable attendant hosts are gone; the Judgment Seat is gone. But set between earth and sky there is a Cross, and on it hangs a Sufferer; and one whisper fills the world: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

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